

Part 11 of ARDA 2

SECTION THREE



Volume Twenty

2004 c.e.

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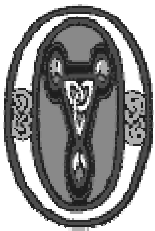
A Druid Missal-Any Oimelc Year XLI Vol. 20 Number 1 January 30th, 2004 c.e.



A well done job

Oimelc Essay: Smoothing

By Stacey Weinberger



imelec, the festival of Brigit, Brighid, Bride, Breedes, one of the major goddesses in the Celtic pantheon. The name Brigit is derived from the Old Celtic word brig meaning high, rank. She is sometimes called the Gaulish Minerva since both the Celtic Brigit and Roman Minerva were associated with healing and crafts. The same root brg is found in the northeast British tribe the time before and during the

Roman period the Brigantes ("high or noble people") as well as in their patron goddess Brigantia. There is a stone relief of Brigantia at the Roman military site at Birrens, the site of a fort in Dumfries, southern Scotland that carries an inscription to Her:

BRIGANTIAE S AMANDVS
ARCITECTVS EX IMPERIO IMP F
"To Brigantia, Sextus Amandus,
former Imperial Architect,
faithful to the emperor (set this up)."

Like Minerva she shares similar iconography, wearing on her breast Minerva's symbol of the Gorgon's head and carrying a spear and the globe of victory, showing a link between the Roman goddess and Brigantia. Like Bride Brigantia was associated with fertility and healing, and was a patroness of the arts. On the Continent near Bregenz, Austria there is a Gaulish tribe, the Brigantii, who probably also called Brigantia their patron deity.

In Ireland we first read of Brigit as an Irish goddess in Cormac's Glossary written in the 10th century. She is seen here as a triple goddess of healing, smithcraft, and poetry. Cormac writes:

"Brighid i.e. a poetess, daughter of the Dagda. This is Brighid the female sage, or woman of wisdom, i.e. Brighid the goddess whom poets adored, because very great and very famous was her protecting care. It is therefore they call her goddess of poets, by this name. Whose sisters were Brighid the

female physician (woman of leechcraft), Brighid the female smith (woman of smithwork), from whose names with all Irishmen a goddess was called Brighid."



In both 12th century manuscripts the Book of Invasions of Ireland (Lebor Gabala Erenn), the mythological history of Ireland, and the Battle of Magh Tuireadh Brigit is mentioned as the daughter of the Dagda, god of the Tuatha De Danaan. In the Book of Invasions she is called a poetess and is associated with domestic animals, cattle and sheep. She is solidified as protectress of the flocks, which carried over into Her guise as the Saint.

Brigit was the territorial goddess of Leinster although She was venerated all over Ireland. It was at Kildare that it was said there was an altar dedicated to Her, where a perpetual fire burned, tended by 19 women. In Christian times 19 nuns tended this fire, and still do to this day, in honor of the Saint Brigit.

In Scotland Bride is still remembered as the patron saint of the family hearth, which hearkens back to her association with smithcraft and poetry, creative inspiration, which the Gaels "regarded as a supersensual form of fire (see the term "fire in the head" in one sense as poetic inspiration). Evidence of this can be seen in some of the kindling and smoothing blessings collected by Alexander Carmichael in his collection of hymns and incantations the Carmina Gadelica. Bride was invoked in the kindling the fire or in smoothing the fire. Where wood had been unobtainable, a peat fire kept burning perpetually, or "smooed" to last through the night. Carmichael writes: "The ceremony of smoothing the fire is artistic and symbolic, and is performed with loving care. The embers are evenly spread on the hearth - which is generally in the middle of the floor - and formed into a circle. The circle is then divided into three equal sections, a small boss being left in the middle. A peat is laid between each section, each peat touching the boss, which forms a common centre... The circle is then covered over with ashes sufficient to subdue but not to extinguish the fire."

SMOORING BLESSING

I will smoor the hearth
As Mary would smoor;
The encompassment of Bride and of Mary,
On the fire and on the floor,
And on the household all.

Who is on the lawn without?
Fairest Mary and her Son,
The mouth of God ordained, the angel of God spoke;
Angels of promise watching the hearth,
Till white day comes to the fire.

BEANNACHADH SMALAI DH

Smalaidh mis an tula
Mar a smaladh Muire;
Comraig Bhride 's Mhuire,

Air an tula's air an lar,
'S air an fhardaich uile.

Co siud air liana mach?
Muire ghrian-gheal 's a Mac,
Bial Dia dh'arradh, aingheal Dia labhradh;
Ainghle geallaidh faire an teallaidh,

Gu'n rig latha geal gu beallaidh.



News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Though Carleton was out of session for Yule, I and one other Druid went out to the stone circle. Other people had been around, it was clear, from the prints in the snow. There was no service, mostly just an enjoyment of the moment and I ended, most sacrilegiously by making a snow angel on top of the center stone.

Carleton is now back in session, though the Druids have not had the first meeting of the year. However, there is exciting news in that my fellow Arch-Druid, Corwin Troost, has returned from a self-imposed exile in Japan and we expect to learn much from his trip.

Bamboo Grove: News from Delaware

Brightest Blessings to All!

Much has happened to the Bamboo Grove recently. There have been sad endings, and hopeful beginnings. During the season of sleep, one of our little muses --Lucky the mouse--passed away into the spirit realm to join one of our other little muses --Cricket (also a mouse)--who had gone on ahead. We now are eight in number:

*the Arch Druid, a stately bamboo plant

*Myself--Scribe/Caretaker/current Bard of the Reform XLI (who has been nowhere to be found for quite awhile, I know, I know! Sorry!)

*The muses--Karma the beautiful and graceful Rough Green snake; Leo the gentle giant of a Maine Coon cat; Panda & Rygel the oddball guinea pigs; and Rascal & Spud the creamsicle colored, ever inquisitive mice

~*~New Beginnings~*~

As for the hopeful beginnings--I recently got engaged to a wonderful scamp named Jeff, whom I think must have at least one "trickster" animal totem like myself! He's an Air Force

Reservist and one of the most unique, endearing, and thoughtful souls I have ever had the honor of meeting in this particular lifetime (grin). I definitely feel blessed, and I look forward to this season of new life with renewed hope and anticipation.

Over the past few seasons, it seems that my personal life has seamlessly begun to meld and keep pace with the seasons and their symbolic meanings. I feel that when I stop trying too hard and finally surrender myself to the dance of life, things just seem to flow easier and much more naturally. Recently I designed my own phoenix tattoo and had it custom done, something I've wanted to do for years. It is a physical and tangible reminder of past trials by fire that I have survived, emerging stronger each time. It is also a reminder that though the fire within may have flickered to an ember at times, it never died out. Although I didn't coordinate the timing of the phoenix tattoo with the new season, it feels particularly appropriate at this time and will always hold extra significance to me.

Brightest blessings,

BrightMirage (Bard of the Reform XLI)

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

O.K. all, not much going on here, we had a major week of snow and ice followed by some power outage that lasted 6 hrs. Study is going good, and the grove is patiently awaiting spring (please hurry). A few new books of reference to study, and a new look at some old traditions. The Grove has as of yet to finish all the text that I have accumulated (editing that is), but I have discovered a few new outlooks by studying nature in its quiet season. Squirrels seem to be the most active, and it is incredible to watch them for six hours to see nature at it's finest. Also, the Groves official date to move to Indiana is March 27th of 2004, and we will still have the same email addy. Anyone else close to Louisville Ky., I will be about 15 mins away on the Indiana side.

Dolanimus

Hemlock Grove: News from New York

No new news from hemlock splinters. This is the season of enforced rest. Minus 16 may be normal for Minnesota but it has largely shut things down here. We harp, write, and struggle to earn money to burn things with next summer.

Rowan-Oak Grove, MOCC: News from Oklahoma

rowan-oak grove in tulsa has had a very full month in december. the new years brought us a new computer and a large donation which enabled us to get much needed office equipment and supplies for the grove. sis rhiannane is up for member of the year for that blessing. other news for january so far is not so good. the grove was devastated when the beloved familiar of one of our members was foully killed and returned its yard hours afterward with his head crushed. peruvian snowflake was m.s. white tigress and her boyfriend m.c.dov. she is our co hps/druidess in training and my next door neighbor. we had several deaths in the grove family over the new year.

m.s. white raven will have her birthday bash on the 24th of january. talking leaves will have about 6 or so pages this month because there is a lot of news to cover and the addition of two regular articles that's all for now i think.

m. s. white raven arch-druidess

Tuatha De Danaan Grove: News from California

Hi, Stacey! Just thought I'd let you know about Tuatha De Danaan Grove, founded 14 years ago when Tezra gave me 3rd Order. It is the old Berkeley/Mother Grove, and has held rituals from time to time; lately, it has been hibernating, but could come back to life if interest were aroused.

Back in 1984 or so, as a parting gift, Isaac handed the reins over to me, but, not at that time being a 3rd, I had to wait to make full use of his offering.

Please list my e-mail address as FrPA861@yahoo.com.

Peace!

Jeffrey

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

After a nearly four-year search we have found cabers to replace the ones rotting or falling over at the Grove site. The search was so difficult because we needed ones with bark still on them and not the (probably arsenic) treated ones more commonly found at lumberyards and building supply stores. Our Server Morag found them at Grove Way Bonsai Nursery in Hayward, the perfect size: 5, 6, and 7 inches in diameter and 8 ft. in length. Ironically it was the first shipment they have had in three years

Posthumous member Emmon had originally set the cabers on the periphery of the Grove site at the point where the Sun would rise on the particular High Day. He rose early on the High Day to mark where the sun came up and set the caber on that spot. He carved a notch at the top of each caber to sight the Sun from the altar. The altar had an indentation built into it for one's staff specifically for that purpose. I feel like the Grove site is becoming complete again. It has been a four and a half year process that has included rebuilding the steps and replacing the sacred Grove trees as they had fallen over or died.

Caber adventure! After a nearly four year search we have found cabers to replace the ones that had rotten or fallen over due to age and the bucks using them to rub the velvet from their antlers, thanks to Server Morag. The week before Oimelc we transported them to the Grove site and hauled them up the hill. The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry however. The week before when we had Druid services I had parked the Druid mobile with one wheel off the asphalt in the mud. This caused the wheel to spin be I still managed to back the car out. I thought the problem was because the car wasn't as heavy as the previous Druid mobile which never had a problem. But I was proved wrong. A friend who had a '61 Chevy Apache panel truck drove the cabers to the Grove site and got his wheel stuck in the same place. This time we had to call the automobile club to tow him out. Because of this delay and the rainy weather of the following day, the setting of the cabers will have to wait for sometime later in February. Extra hands are welcome.



Calling the mists.

Back to the Shadows Again

By Emmon Bodfish

(In the first incarnation of A Druid Missal-Any Emmon would periodically publish "see and do" articles for readers who wondered how to "do" Druidism. I found these articles ultimately helpful and practical and of course very do-able if one but put effort into them—Editor's note.)

The Druids of folktale were imputed with the power to create a magical mist, the "Cleo Trom" in which to hide themselves or to obscure the field of battle and aid their chieftains' armies. In fact, according to one source, ability to raise the Druid Mist was a test of anyone claiming to be a Fear-droi or a Wizard. This ability is also remembered in fragments of the Ossianic poems and in folklore from the Continent. In his book on magic, Steven Richards remarks that this "Invisibility is the peculiar mark of the Western magician as levitation is of the Oriental one."

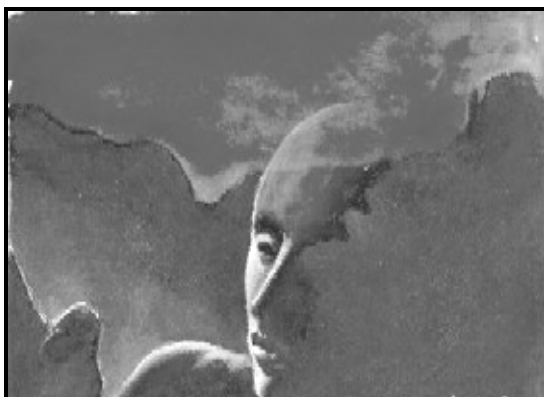
In practice, there are different levels of making oneself invisible. At the first level is the crass psychological technique of diverting attention to something else while you quietly walk away, or perform the slight-of-the-hand that completes the trick. Stage magicians, thieves, and Sherlock Holmes are adepts at this one.

On the second level is the method actor's strategy of changing his emotional state, manner and gait such that he seems to turn into (or out to be) someone or something other than who he was, and so to "disappear" into the role. Crowley, working at this level of transformation, tells of the following incident that happened to him in London. When he was walking down a lane, he saw, coming toward him, a group of students who knew him and who were not particularly friendly to him or his ideas. Wishing to avoid their ridicule or worse, he ducked down a side street, but they followed him. The street proved to be a blind end. After stepping into a shop doorway, he rushed back out, having changed his gait and demeanor utterly, and bustled past them in a businesslike way. They did not recognize him and he escaped.

At the third level is something between this technique and that of thought projection or active telepathy. Mrs. Alexander-David Neil describes the first few rings of this level in her book of observations of mystics in India and Tibet. Basically it involves the ability to control your output of emotional energy, your projection of your "presence" in the situation. If you walk through a crowd shouting, bumping against people, and otherwise calling attention to yourself, you will make yourself

quite visible. However, if you steal along noiselessly, you may be able to pass without being seen. Animals know this instinctively, and use it to catch their prey. As J.H. Brennan points out, merely sitting motionless cuts down on your visibility. Beasts of prey avoid this difficulty by bobbing their heads, creating the illusion of motion. However quiet you are, though, there is still the unquietness generated by your mind. The work of the mind generates an energy which spreads all around the one who produces it, and this energy is felt in various ways by those who come into touch with it. If you can stop even that source of noise, you become as silent as one could be. You maybe seen in the way that a camera "sees" things, but you will not be noticed. No knowledge consciousness, (nampar shespa) follows the visual contact; we do not remember that this contact has occurred.

"When the mind inhibits emanation of its radiative energy," says Evans-Wentz, "it ceases to be a source of mental stimuli to others, so that they become unconscious of the presence of the Adept of the Art just as they are unconscious of invisible beings living in a rate of vibration unlike their own." It is like the ostrich burying his head in the sand. One draws his attention into himself, instead of directing it outward, and by stopping the flow of the mind, turns off the noise.



In the most elementary sense, this form of invisibility is just moving along quietly. "The real secret of invisibility is not concerned with the laws of optics at all," writes Crowley. "The trick is to prevent people from noticing you when they normally would do so." As the test of his power, Crowley took a walk in the street in a golden crown and a scarlet robe without attracting attention. Eliphas Levi makes the same point in several of his manuscripts. This non-projection technique of un-noticibility/invisibility is described by this author's friend, who is considerably good at it, as "pull in your vibe." The Druid Mist cannot hide you if you continue to project a strong emotional presence. Some people say this feels like a drawing in of their personal energy, pulling it back in through the area just above the solar plexus.

Begin, then, by becoming mentally silent, calming your emotions until you reach emotional neutrality, having withdrawn your presence into yourself. Being able to stop the sentences flowing through your head is essential to any success in spiritual or psychic endeavors. It is the first rung of the ladder. This is mentioned in so many different religious and magical traditions that it must be accepted as one of the essential ingredients. Second, you must learn to stop, or put aside, the mood of the moment. This means stopping the flow of emotional energy surging up and down the body. We can all do this, if for only a moment. Take for example the experience of waiting for an important phone call. It is important to you to make a good impression. But while you are waiting by the phone, you become involved in a heated argument with another person in

the room. Emotion is surging up and down through your body. Then the phone rings; this is it; you must be personable. You stop. That moment of suspension when you have left the argument and before you turn your attention to the phone, is it, the emotional neutral-point. You can learn to prolong that minute of emotional silence.

When you have silenced your mental verbalizations and are holding a neutral emotional stance, pull in your social, interactive energy, and your presence will seem to fade into the background. You have become a shadow. A camera will "see" you sitting there, but you will not be noticed. You will not register on the consciousness or in the memories of other people. As a secondary benefit, this mental state allows you to see the world quite objectively, in increased detail and dimensionality.

To this state of unnoticibility you add the fourth level by forming the Druid Mist. While it is the least understood part of the art of invisibility, it has been used and described for millennia, just as our ancestors could throw a missile accurately without understanding gravity or trajectory. Forming the Cleo Trom may involve the ability to control either light, or matter, or perception. The Mist seems to absorb light; it is dull colored, gray, and visually uninteresting, as well as hard for the eye to focus on; it does not make itself noticeable. Forming it requires preparation and practice. First, you must train yourself to be able to concentrate on one thing for a fairly long time, ten to twenty minutes. Training the attention and developing the will are basics in all magical traditions. It makes the difference between magic as psychic phenomena and magic as wishful thinking. In learning these skills, small amounts of practice daily works better than long sessions, infrequently. The learning may take anywhere from two weeks to two years, but there are interesting experiences along the way.

Begin by getting mentally silent and emotionally calm. Staring at a dark, plain background, relax your vision, focusing in the middle distance. Concentrate your will and energy on a point in mid-air four or five feet in front of you. Madame Blavatsky found it helped to think of willing the matter making up the air to gather and concentrate at this point. This may require a number of practice sessions of ten to twenty minutes each. When the Mist starts to form, it is grayish and almost invisible. You may only notice that you can no longer see the texture of the dark backdrop. For some reason there is a tendency at first for the eyes to cross while practicing this, so privacy is recommended. ("Just what we need...a gonzo wizard." cf. Bored of the Rings) After you have produced some of the Mist, you can counter its tendency to disperse by willing it to spin counter clockwise and contract. When you have gathered a mass of the Mist, a good amount which you can definitely see, the final step is to place it where you want it to be, between yourself and noxious stimuli or yourself and other persons. My consultant describes the technique as holding the Cleo with your eyes and pulling it along with your gaze. A woman mystic whom Madame Blavatsky interviewed during her oriental travels, collected and controlled the Mist by moving her hands as though gathering something together and guiding it. This would be the mudra approach. It is a technique widely used by Western mediums. When you think you can form the Mist reliably, success is always sporadic at first, try practicing with a full length mirror, placed eight or ten feet away from you. This way you can see how much of your reflection is blotted out by what looks like a grayish film on the surface of the mirror. Until you are very adept, be cautious of inviting friends to watch. The phenomena requires all of your concentration, and because friends are more disturbing to it than strangers. Anything that evokes an emotional response from you dissipates the effect. When you are well practiced, it is possible to get up, wrapping the Cleo Trom around you like a circular curtain and move

about unobtrusively, unnoticed by those around you. But you must maintain the psychological silence and physical unobtrusiveness described as Level Three, or people will become aware of your presence, though not of the details of your physical appearance. H.S. Lewis tells an interesting account of this in one of his autobiographical essays. He was practicing forming the mist in a cafeteria, in order to shut out the noise of the people around him and be undisturbed. When he finished his meal, and went to pay, he recognized the owner of the establishment, an old acquaintance of his, working the cash register. He spoke to the man in a friendly way, but his friend treated him coldly, like a peculiar stranger and would give him no indication of recognition. On his way out of the restaurant, Lewis realized that he still had some of the Cleo Trom wrapped about him, not having dispersed it. This is usually done by dismissing it with your mind, willing it to disperse outward and upward, or in counter-clockwise swirls away from you. Some people find it is only necessary to "let go of it from the will."

"The Mist begins to gently lift. The air begins to clear."

The Mist will disperse naturally as you put your attention on immediate matters and become re-involved with the business of the day and the emotions of the moment.

Photographs I have seen of people practicing holding the Cleo Trom around themselves, show an unfocused area, or streaked appearance in the place of the person's image.

This may seem small stuff compared to descriptions in the old sagas, but even in the Iron Age, it required a fair number of Druids to obscure a battlefield.

Other Druid Groups

Ancient Order of Druids in America

Greetings all,

I'm pleased to announce that the Ancient Order of Druids in America has a website again—<http://www.aoda.org>—and is on its way out of five years of hibernation. There's a short history by the previous Grand Archdruid at <http://www.aoda.org/aodahist.htm>, for those who are interested in its origins and affiliations.

Mike Scharding's RDNA site is also listed on the AODA links page on the contact and links page, <http://www.aoda.org/contact.htm>.

Yours beneath the sacred oaks,

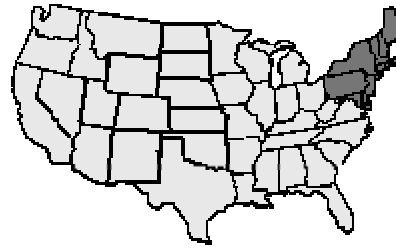
John Michael Greer

North East Druid Coalition

Welcome to all Followers of the Druid Path from the North East

The purpose of the North East Druid Coalition is to foster the goals you will see below in support of our path. Formed in August of 2003, the NEDC is comprised of and open to all orders, groves and Druidic organizations in our region. The North East Druid Coalition covers NJ, NY, PA, MA, CT, RI, VT, ME, NH, and Ontario, Canada.

Looking for Druid community in your area? We can help. See our links on the Navigation Bar at the top of the pages to the resources that we offer.



The goals of the NEDC are:

- o To provide greater visibility for Druidism in this region...
- o Provide a vehicle for a united voice in local, regional, national and international matters that concern us
- o Provide networking opportunities and contacts for those on or wish to be on the Path of Druidism
- o Provide support for the projects of the various orders and organizations
- o To improve regional, national and international communications within the discipline and to work toward better regional organization of events and seasonal activities.

Our Structure

We recognize that modern Druidism encompasses many paths; therefore no group shall claim precedence over any other at our gatherings.

In keeping with the tradition of Druids throughout history we hold that Druids are men and women of peace and integrity, serving as teachers, philosophers, ambassadors, judges, seers, lawyers, healers, poets and bards for their tribes.

Every Druid group in our geographic region is entitled to have at least one representative on the on-line planning committee for events and seasonal activities

The NEDC offers the following workshops:

The Sacred Hearth: The Goddess Bridget and the Feast of Imbolc, Workshop on The Goddess Bridget and the Feast of Imbolc, followed by Imbolc Ritual based on authentic Scottish and Irish folklore and rituals. We will explore Bridget's role as Patroness of the Bards, Protector of Women and Children, and Mistress of the Elements. Fee is \$35. Visit Dun na Sidhe website at www.mobiusbandwidth.com or Register via <http://www.goddessofthesevensisters.com/> Date: Monday, February 2, 2004. Time: 7:00 Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

Irish Ceili and Set dance Workshops

At the Guiding Star Grange, 401 Chapman Street, Greenfield, MA. 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays. 3 PM to 6 PM. Admission is \$7.00. Leather soled shoes recommended. Call for info: 860-688-3094 Class dates: January 11, 25 February 8, 22, 29 March 14, 28 Date: Sunday, February 08, 2004. Time: 3:00 Contact: Cathy and Jim Mieczkowski at mairecait@att.net

The Triple Spiral: Intro to Celtic Magick and Celtic Spiritual Tradition

Three part workshop on Celtic Spirituality, Magick and Deities with Celtic priestess, Harvard Scholar and author Sharynne NicMhacha. Location and power of the Otherworld, sacred sites, cosmology, the Celtic year wheel, the three worlds and four directions, sacred talismans, and Irish, Gaulish, British deities. Wed. 2/11, 2/18 and 2/25 from 7-9 pm. Full descriptions at Dun na Sidhe website at www.mobiusbandwidth.com or

register online at www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com.
Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at
highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

Celtic Myth, Poetry and Language

Four part workshop on Celtic language, myth, deity names, incantations, poems and songs (Old Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish) with Celtic priestess, Harvard scholar and author Sharynne NicMhacha. Sliding scale \$45- 55. Western Mass area - 1 to 1 1/2 hrs from Boston, Hartford, Brattleboro, etc. Sunday 2/15, Sat. 2/21, Sat. 3/20 and Sat. 3/27 from 4-6 pm. Last class is potluck and ceili. Date: Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

The Mysteries of Albion: Myth and Magick of Avalon, Britain and Wales.

Three part workshop, Wed. 3/24, 3/31 and 4/7 from 7-9 pm. Part One: Folklore, Fairy Lore and Magick of Wales. Part Two: The Spirits of Annwn - British and Welsh Legends, Deities and Mythology. Part Three: The Lessons of Avalon: The Spiritual Core of Arthurian Myth and Legend. Full descriptions at Dun na Sidhe website at <http://www.mobiusbandwidth.com/> or Register via www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com. Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

The Nine-Fold Path of the Celtic Goddess

Meet the powerful Goddesses of Celtic tradition, and explore nine major archetypes (including witch, healer, land goddess, sage, mother etc.) We will connect with and honour these divine women in ceremony, and learn how to develop relationship with them in our daily lives. Register online via www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com Date: Monday, April 19, 2004 - Time: 7:00 Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

May Day and the Celtic Fairy Tradition

Join us for this celebration of Beltaine, the beginning of Summer! We will learn about traditional lore associated with the Celtic Fairy Faith, including how to make offerings to and honour the Fairies (the People of the Sidhe) throughout the ritual year. We will also participate in a meditation and ceremony to honour the Sidhe. Register online via www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com Date: Monday, April 26, 2004 - Time: 7:00 Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

Tree Workshop and Beltaine Celebration

May 1-2, 2004 TREE WORKSHOP AND BELTAINE CELEBRATION with author, herbalist and Druid Priestess Ellen Evert Hopman M.Ed. Frederick, MD. Learn the medicinal and spiritual aspects of local trees and the basics of Druid ritual form. For registration and information Contact: 301-829-5048. www.springfever.com

Wisdom of Trees, Language of Birds: Intermediate Celtic Magick

Two Part workshop in Intermediate Celtic Magick and Spirituality. Part One: Exploring the power, symbolism and mythological language associated with sacred animals and birds, ways to honour and connect with these spirits. Part Two: The Voice of the Forest - The Mysteries of Ogam, The Irish Tree alphabet. Wed. 5/5 and 5/12 7-9 pm. Full descriptions at Dun na Sidhe website at www.mobiusbandwidth.com or register online at www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com. Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

Druid, Shaman, Priestess: Intro to Celtic Shamanism and the Sisterhood of Nine.

Two part workshop on Celtic shamanism, mysticism and the Ninefold Sisterhood of priestesses. Part One: The three-fold cosmos, sacred animals and the power of flight, learn the basics of shamanic journeying and elements of the Celtic shamanic tradition. Part Two: Wisdom of Druids and Bards, vision and prophecy, and traditions regarding nine-fold sisterhood of priestesses or goddesses. Mondays. 5/17 and 5/24, 7-9 pm. Full descriptions at Dun na Sidhe website at www.mobiusbandwidth.com or register online at www.GoddessOfTheSevenSisters.com. Contact: Sharynne NicMhacha at highlandpriestess@hotmail.com

NEDC website: <http://www.technovate.org/nedruid/>

Resources

Cross Quarter Days

By Ignatz Fezman, Preceptor, Poison Oak Grove

(In the Druid Chronicles (Evolved) there was a Table of Moveable Feasts that showed the exact times, in Greenwich Mean Time, of the Solstices, Equinoxes, and the arrival of the Sun at the midpoints of the Fixed Signs and at the arrival 16 deg 18 min of declination North and South of the Celestial Equator, in other words the Cross Quarter Days. The dates and times were given up until the end of 1999, after that Druids were on their own. Until now. Grove Mathematician and Preceptor Ignatz has developed a program using to calculate the Cross Quarter Days, the astronomical High Days. The dates and times of the Solstices and Equinoxes are easily found in the yearly almanac or Pocket Astrologer. A Druid Missal-Any hopes to publish Brother Ignatz's High Day calculations to year 2100 soon. In the meantime here are the dates for 2004 along with the explanation of his methods. --Editors note.)

Astrodiest (www.astro.com) is a Swiss outfit that sells astrological services and software. They write and sell their own astrological programs; along the way, they have developed a software toolkit for programmers who want to write astrological software. The toolkit is called the Swiss Ephemeris and it comprises two parts:

1. A series of data files, giving the positions of all objects of astrological interest over a span of more than 10,000 years, based on a cleverly compressed version of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's astronomical ephemeris. This is divided into a number of files, each covering 400 years.

2. A library of program functions for accessing the data, and for doing useful calculations, including various date conversions and co-ordinate transformations.

The Swiss Ephemeris is released under a dual license: if you use it to write commercial programs, then you owe Astrodiest a license fee; if instead you distribute your programs for free, or don't distribute them at all, then you don't need to pay Astrodiest.

The Swiss Ephemeris is written in the programming language C, and is intended for use by programmers writing in that language. Many other languages have what's called a Foreign Function Interface (FFI), which lets their programs use pre-compiled software written in other languages (i.e. the Swiss Ephemeris); however, in my experience these FFIs are often incomplete and poorly documented. Since my C skills are rather thin and I needed the practice, I decided to work in C rather than

in the languages I'd used for my previous cross-quarter calculations

Cross-Quarter Days for 2004

Greenwich Mean Time

Oimelc as 15 deg of Aquarius, Feb. 4, 2004 11:58 GMT
Oimelc as 16 deg 18 min decl, Feb. 4, 2004 14:55 GMT
Beltane as 15 deg of Taurus, May 5, 2004 04:04 GMT
Beltane as 16 deg 18 min decl, May 5, 2004 00:56 GMT
Lughnasadh as 15 deg of Leo, Aug. 7, 2004 04:20 GMT
Lughnasadh as 16 deg 18 min decl, Aug. 7 2004 07:30 GMT
Samhain as 15 deg of Scorpius, Nov. 7, 2004 01:60 GMT
Samhain as 16 deg 18 min decl, Nov. 6, 2004 22:59 GMT

Cross-Quarter Days for 2004, Pacific Time

Oimelc as 15 deg of Aquarius, Feb. 4 2004 03:58 PST
Oimelc as 16 deg 18 min decl Feb. 4, 2004 06:55 PST
Beltane as 15 deg of Taurus, May 4, 2004 21:04 PDT
Beltane as 16 deg 18 min decl, May 4, 2004 17:56 PDT
Lughnasadh as 15 deg of Leo, Aug. 6, 2004 21:20 PDT
Lughnasadh as 16 deg 18 min decl, Aug 7 2004 00:30 PDT
Samhain as 15 deg of Scorpius, Nov. 6, 2004 17:60 PST
Samhain as 16 deg 18 min decl, Nov. 6, 2004 14:59 PST

News

Call for Nominations:

MAA Graduate Student Committee

The Medieval Academy of America's Graduate Student Committee is looking for graduate students to serve on the committee for a two-year term, 2004-2006.

The committee acts on behalf of graduate students in North America and overseas to voice their concerns and promote their participation within the Medieval Academy of America (MAA) and the broader academic community.

For more information on the committee and the medieval graduate student Med-Grad listserv, please see the Medieval Academy Website at <http://www.medievalacademy.org>, under "Graduate Students." You do not have to be a member of the MAA to sign up for the listserv.

All graduate students interested in serving on the Graduate Student Committee, and who are/will be members of the MAA, are invited to nominate themselves. Please (re)introduce yourself to the med-grad listserv and send a brief statement, c.v., and the name of one reference as soon as possible to Richard K. Emmerson at RKE@MedievalAcademy.org. Indicate your university, discipline, and particular interest in contributing to the committee. We hope to represent a wide range of academic disciplines and geographic regions on the committee. Two graduate students will be appointed to the committee by the Council when it meets in Seattle in April 2004.



Military Pagan Network

Board of Directors

Selects New Executive Director

Columbia, MD - January 14, 2004: On the 14th anniversary of the founding of the Military Pagan Network, Inc. founder, Chairman and Executive Director John Machate stepped out of office. Upon resignation he stated "It has been a fun time but it is now time for the organization to stand on its own under new leadership." He also stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Board of Directors allowing Angela Peerman to be elected in his place. Mr. Machate will remain on the Board of Directors and run for re-election this year, he will also serve the new Executive Director as PR Manager and Webmaster.

It did not take the board long to determine who would sit in the top staff seat of the organization. Dr. Mark Drake Spaeth of Circle Sanctuary and the Lady Liberty League, most well known as Circle's candidate for military Chaplaincy was the outgoing Executive Directors one and only choice. After a brief interview period and introduction to the positions duties Dr. Spaeth accepted the nomination with the blessings of Selena Fox of Circle Sanctuary, "Drake has been helping Pagans in the US military for many years. Best wishes to him and MPN as he is expanding this work as MPN's new Executive Director! And thanks to John for his many years of service!"

Founded in 1992, incorporated in 1997 the Military Pagan Network Inc. acted as a store and group information resource for Neopagans in the military. The corporation now provides material regarding various Neopagan religions to the Chaplaincy, as well as fulfilling its original goal of providing contacts near military bases around the world. In 1997 the corporation expanded its services to include assisting military members with the proper handling of harassment and discrimination. In 1999 the IRS awarded the Military Pagan Network, Inc. an advanced determination of tax-exempt status in accordance with Internal Revenue Code 501(a) as an organization described in section 501(c)3. In 2002 that advanced determination was lifted and the Military Pagan Network, Inc. has been found to be tax exempt as described in section 501(a) as an organization described in section 501(c)3 if the Internal Revenue Code.

Note to editors: If you are interested in viewing additional information on Military Pagan Network, please visit the Military Pagan Network website at <http://www.milpagan.org/> Copyright ©2004, Military Pagan Network Inc.



write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

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A Holiday to the Iron Age

(Iron Age House anyone?)

Holidaymakers will be able to spend a week living in the Iron Age at a new tourist attraction being planned in the Forest of Dean (England). Tourists will give up their clothes and modern items and dress in costume and spend time living in the village of Cinderbury. They will sleep in primitive huts and will have to cook for themselves, mine ore, make tools and weapons and look after the village's animals. Mobile phones and watches will be confiscated and the project website says that "make-up, jewelry, hair products and perfumes are strongly discouraged and will possibly be mocked".

The living history project is being created near Clearwell. Although corporate funds are still needed it is hoped the village will be open by May. Project boss Jasper Blake said: "The village came about in a weird kind of way. I have now been doing archaeology in the area for 10 years with different groups and I love working in this area but I wanted to earn a living doing it. I visited other places which are commercial operations and I thought I could do it with this place. We now have our plot of land and have made a deal with the landowner and we are pretty well ready to put in a planning application. This is going to be a high profile, media friendly project and there is nothing much like it anywhere else in the country so we expect interest to be high."

Mr. Blake added: "If we get corporate interest there is no reason why we can't be open by May. There is no way that we could get the whole thing built ready for then, but part of the experience will be to get people to get involved with building some of the roundhouses and help build it up as a living community."

Mr. Blake explained that although there were no remains of Iron Age huts in the Forest they would be using a template of what is known about roundhouses and use local materials to build them.

For more information see the Cinderbury website (<http://www.cinderbury.co.uk/>)

Calendar

Oimec as 15 degrees of Aquarius occurs on Feb. 4 2004 3:58 a.m. Pacific Standard Time or by an alternative method as 16 degrees 18 minutes of declination on Feb. 4, 2004 at 6:55 a.m. Pacific Standard Time. Hang your Druid robe outside on the eve of Oimec so that Bride might bless it as she passes by.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or

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Spring Equinox Year XLI
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Spring Equinox Essay:
Rhiannon and Macha

By Emmon Bodfish
Reprinted from Spring Equinox 1987,
A Druid Missal-Any



Spring Equinox, balance, awakening, a time of planting, a time in keeping with the theme of Irish Macha, Patroness of farmers, the Horse-goddess, who could run with the speed of a horse or become one. On the Continent She was called Epona. She was Rhiannon in Wales. She is a shape-shifting Goddess who can appear in human form, or in the form of a mare, or of a woman mounted on horseback. She is

responsible not only for the fertility of herds, but of the ground as well. She is described in Celtic myths as the mother of kings or as capable of bestowing sovereignty on the rightful king. She is represented by the white mare whom the Kings of Ireland espouse at their coronations. Prof. J. Duran speculates that Macha and the mare represents the agrarian classes, the "Tuath," the third of the three castes in ancient Celtic society. (The other two were the warriors and the Druids. "Caste" is a poor word since these categories were not rigid, and some movement between them was possible, but it is used in Indo-European studies for lack of a better term.)

Macha may have been the Patroness of the Tuath, as Bride was the Patroness of Bards, and as the Morgani were associated with the warrior caste. Llyr, or Manannan McLlyr, it is said, also has ancient equine themes running through His worship. There is a theory that He was a Horse-deity back on the steppes of the Indo-European homeland, and that only later, when the Celtic peoples reached the Atlantic coast and the Island, did He become a Sea-god. He is always portrayed in a chariot, or riding in a boat, or in a combination of both, as in His sea-shell boat drawn by porpoises. This considered, He may be more a charioteer or vehicular god than a Horse-deity.* Epona rides astride. Cernunnos, the other shape-shifting, fertility-bestowing deity, never rides. He sits on the ground among the wild beasts, and is spoken of as running with the deer. These latter two figures hark back to the earliest Eur-Asian levels, very likely to the Paleolithic. Similar figures may have been common to the

Ice Age peoples of Eastern Europe and West Asia from whom the Proto-Indo-Europeans sprang. In that early time, in the art of the Magdelinian hunters, a similar theme can be seen.



The Paleolithic dancer wearing a horse-head mask is a woman. The men wear disguises of horned animals, bear, or mammoths. The connection between Macha, the female shape-shifter-shaman-magician, and the horse may be very old, paralleling the male enchanter of horned animals, from the time when the Horned Man and the Horse Woman danced in Paleolithic caves.

*Could He be persuaded to protect us nowadays in our cars?



News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Carleton runs along as usual. It's been a cold and snowy winter up until recently, which has made for some good celebrations (as well as broomball), though weather suddenly warmed up in the middle of last week, and spring seems intent on coming early.

While I am in semi-exile due to my senior project, Corwin is currently running the grove and doing a good job at innovation. He's come up with a new ceremony, which has been described by one person as druidical free-association. Corwin calls it calling. Basically you choose one aspect of the world to come and be with us for the ceremony, and list some of the important aspects/things it can help with.

We also celebrated "Create your own religious texts night." Only one religious text was created: The Book of Pass Around. The people who were present each wrote a verse and passed it to the next person. Some time next term we'll get together and everyone will bring their own version of what they wanted to happen, breaking off after one of the earlier verses. If all goes well I will submit those for the next Missal-Any.

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Mike has been doing nothing but editing the Green Book and Magazine Volume, such that he has miserably memorized the two mega-volumes, and can think only of freedom from the endeavor. This month the Cherry Blossoms of Washington will distract him a little, and he is expecting a new puppy to train for the Guide Dog Foundation. He is currently seeking a job in the Federal Government bureaucracy, so that he can relocate after a few years to the West Coast.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

All is well here, lots of rain, and the ground is soaked through. Have not had much time to do too much except pack and get ready for the move. Final date is 3/27/04 but don't worry, Dravidia Grove will continue in Indiana and I hope that the area change will provide new members as well. Have found a great place for purchasing swords. I collect them and have really got some beautiful pieces and at a real good price...These are not the high quality pieces, nor the cheap display pieces either, they are real decorative swords...

Well Blessed Be and cya in Indiana

Rowan Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

Rowan-Oak Grove is undergoing a reorganization and general spring cleaning early this year. adjustments to delegation of offices and authority have taken a major load off arch-druidess m.s. white raven's shoulders. another change that is occurring is that as sis tsarah is preparing to move to another town we are going to have to have someone else with a vehicle that will provide our car pooling for field trips. even with all of these changes happening we just added the Gray Angels Grove in texas, adding another 25-30 members to our grove family, our 40th member to the tulsa grove and our 16th member (living in florida) to our online grove (having members all over usa and canada). at the same time the muskoguee mother grove is going through changes that i'm sure my mentor myrddin will tell you of. it looks like for both of us it will be a busy 6-8 months. m.c. werebear, m.s. white tigress, m.s. maximus pheonixfire all received their elevations from novice to apprentice (1st degree sharayean trad) in the ovates classes and continue on towards achieving full druidic wicca training as the tradition itself evolves toward a more fully druidic path. secretary/treasurer m.c. werebear is catching up on all the paperwork that couldn't be done while the computer was down, including the yearly financial report for 2003 and the finalizing of the by-laws adapted from the original tbrsc by-laws, (our first grove now headed by m.s. cattwoman in wagner) bro valens our arch druid is head of the circle of Cybele study group and administrator the knights of the celtic cross with our sir redwolf as fully trained at mocc with the knights there and the head of our security team. the grove is also making plans for a business venture to more fully be self supporting and give grove members that have been unable to find work a chance at gainful employment. we will send you more on this as it evolves. beltaine looks to be one of our busiest convocations of all time with many things to vote on that will effect our grove family, in addition to our yearly field trip to renfaire at muskoguee as part of the celebration. ostararites will be held march 20 according to the grove calendar barring unforeseen events and the feast of sharaye and her consort the 31 of march which is a sharayean trad minor holy day.

the blessings of light, love and healing to you all

m.s. white raven, arch-druidess
rowan-oak grove

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

The ongoing work on the Grove site moves slower than molasses in January. Due to an extremely wet winter we have not been able to carve site lines and set up the new cabers marking the High Days. The weather seems to be cooperating with the coming of the Spring and we hope to get them up in time for Beltaine.

Poison Oak Grove is sad to announce the passing of the tenant of the main house, Mike Auerbach. Mike was a small yet strong and feisty woman. Sometimes she could be difficult about sharing the electricity and water, but this past year we came to an understanding. May her journey to Tir nan Og be a smooth one as she waits for her partner Charlie and her beloved dogs Kodak and Reno.



ARDA 2 Update

By Mike Scharding, Digitalis Grove

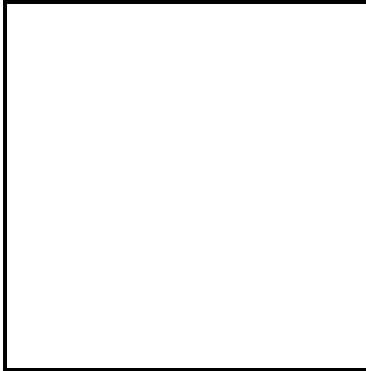
As you know, about this time last year, I promised that ARDA 2 would be imminently released, and continued to make deadline extensions. Well, after taking two of the book projects directly under my wing, the presses have finished the massive 847 page Green Volume and the 700 page Magazine Volume is nearly completed and will be sent to the printer in Early April. The 750 page Main Volume should be out in May, if all goes well, as it is the most complicated of the series. Those who ordered the book can begin to expect it in their pot of gold shortly after St. Patrick's Day by Leprechaun Rainbow Express.



The Green Books doubled from my early estimates, and anything that was vaguely copyright protected was removed from the Main Volume. The contents are viewable for free on-

line and can be downloaded, printed and bound locally by yourself at: www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html

One problem I had is that it went way over-estimate, and hardcover binding is just simply not feasible at \$45 per book, in addition to printing costs of \$25; so I had them softbound like a telephone book at \$10 per book. Library copies will still be hardbound. Another problem I had was that I waited too long to cash most of the checks you sent. I will return them with the first volume that I'm mailing out, and I'm hoping that you'll reissue new checks at the original estimate of \$71 for the set of three.



<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/newesticons/sp4ballymotebig.jpg>
for surrounding page's graphics.

Ogham Rant

By Mark Carter

(This article evolved out of a posting on the newsgroup alt.religion.druid as a sort of open letter to a single person. It has been rewritten by the author for inclusion here. We at the Missal-Any hope that it provokes some thoughts as well as some comments.—The Editor)

As many readers know, there's an extreme divergence of Ogham theories between the trained experts (historians and archeologists) and the neopagan community. Mainstream historians place ogham's creation in fifth century Ireland while many neopagans push it back to a much earlier time. For a moment, let's totally disregard the origins of Ogham and focus only upon its later usage and the changing interpretations of it. By the time we reach the manuscript tradition and start examining fourteenth century texts, like the Book of Ballymote, we are at least nine hundred years removed from Ogham's creation and its invention begins to appear irrelevant to the argument. Possibly Ogham had undergone significant reinterpretation between the fifth and fourteenth centuries and the Auraicept may no longer reflect the original tradition. The scribe was certainly copying from older texts but may have been unfamiliar with what he was copying or perhaps the text was incomplete. Portions of the Auraicept appear childish and we suspect the authors were trying to flesh out a system which was already in decline when they wrote.

Despite these flaws one fact becomes obvious; Ogham is a memory system. Regardless of what else it might have been the memory training possibilities are the most conspicuous when you look at the Auraicept, the kennings, and the variants such as river Ogham, church Ogham, and fortress Ogham. Yet, many modern druids have placed the cart before the horse in their interpretations of this system. They tend to believe that the kennings and other Ogham listings were used to conceal Ogham in literature; particularly in poems. Then, with this misconception in mind, they search Celtic literature for Ogham

kennings in hopes of finding hidden messages. Not only do they search Irish literature but they spend a great deal of time examining Welsh literature as well, despite the fact that Ogham was an Irish invention and not Welsh at all. Consider what has been done to Cad Goddeu; a late and garbled Welsh poem constantly being reinterpreted in light of Irish Ogham theories. Robert Graves popularized this method and gave it the unofficial blessing of the literary crowd but it was heading that way even before him.

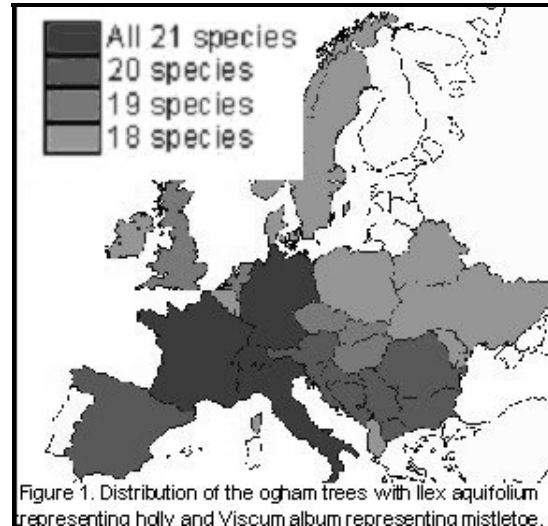


Figure 1. Distribution of the ogham trees with *Ilex aquifolium* representing holly and *Viscum album* representing mistletoe. Distribution of trees mentioned in Ogham, related to Europe, showing a preference for a possible western continental origin.

Concealing Ogham messages in poetry is crazy. Just try to write out even the shortest druidic statement in Ogham kennings and then devise a poem around it. The poem would take hundreds of lines to convey a single sentence. Think of the most basic druidic concept; something like Mela's "act bravely in war, souls are immortal, there is another life after death." In English (rather than Gaelic) this totals 73 letters. You'd have to write out 73 Ogham kennings and devise a poem around them; keeping the same letter order, otherwise, the message would be garbled. It's impossible and justifies Macalister's claim that Ogham is "childishly impractical". Druids didn't do this. Later bards didn't do it either. If they did two things would be obvious: there would be several times more Ogham kennings in the surviving poetry and there would be much more surviving poetry itself because the amount required to conceal druidic beliefs would be massive. Clearly, there are no hidden druidic messages waiting to be found in the surviving poetry.

The question is: what was the point of the kennings and Ogham listings in the Auraicept if they weren't used for concealment? Obviously, the kennings and listings were used as a memory system. The real point of these lists wasn't to secretly communicate druidic messages but to memorize lists of important fortresses, churches, and common names of local birds and rivers; among other things. The Ogham thus became a mnemonic aid allowing the user to memorize long lists of important names, places, or events. In its most basic form this memory system needed no religious or poetic value at all. However, poets could draw upon these mental lists when needed and such Ogham listings could supply a needed word when the poet either suffered writer's block or recited impromptu poetry. A poet needing a word, which started with B, could mentally scour the various Ogham listings for a fortress, church, bird, or other object to flesh out his composition. Thus, occasionally, we find a single Ogham kenning in a poem but find no others.

Why? Not because the poem contains hidden messages but simply because the poet needed a fitting word or phrase and fell back on the memorized kennings to supply it.

Regardless of Ogham's age or its original intent one thing is clear; by the fourteenth century it was being used for a memory system. Probably, it had been used like this for centuries before the fourteenth century. Some of the kennings and other Ogham variants are incredibly childish and this is possibly because the authors of the *Auraicept* were recording a memory system, which was already in decline at the time. They were in fact attempting to flesh out a memory system, which was already partially lost. This also accounts for the false kennings and corrupt Ogham variants within the text. Some of the variants such as "man Ogham", "dog Ogham", or "cow Ogham" aren't true kennings. They simply substitute the number of letter strokes with the number of cows or dogs. Nuinne becomes five cows instead of five strokes; nobody is fooled by this and it serves no purpose. These "weaker" Ogham variants are either late and corrupt imitations or early attempts at creating a memory system from Ogham. I suggest they are late corruptions simply because the "stronger" points of Ogham seem to predate them and therefore prove that the stronger (i.e.: more useful) kennings are older.

The same can be said of many of the written variants upon the stemline. "Ridge Ogham", "shield Ogham", and all the other variants, which attempt to conceal the written script, are childish and fool nobody. They look like the sort of ciphers children use to pass notes at school and they would be no harder to decode. They are possible evidence that the scribe was attempting to flesh out a partial system. Either he was working from an incomplete/corrupt text, he was making things up based on what he thought Ogham was once used for, or (most likely) he was expanding upon a shorter text, which was nothing more than earlier notes taken by someone else who was familiar with the complete system. The earlier text possibly contained many headings and listings for Ogham, which were not given, and the scribe merely fleshed it out with what he thought those Ogham variants were. In modern terms: he was trying to write his thesis using only the Cliffnotes.

Therefore, Ogham could exist with no magic or religious purpose at all. It was merely a memory system and the magic/religious/poetic side could have developed either concurrently with Ogham's creation or sometime after the fact. This accounts for the close association between knowledge and poetry in Irish culture. You don't need to be smart to write poetry but it certainly helps and anyone who memorized the Ogham kennings and variants would have a mental spreadsheet in their head to fall back upon any time they were stuck with a poem. Thus, the more of this system you knew the smarter you became and also the more able to write poetry. Yet, any time you fleshed out a poem with an Ogham kenning you were, in a sense, putting "filler" into your poem. Anyone familiar with Ogham would notice the kenning and realize you were falling back upon hack methods. Thus, poets didn't strive to secretly utilize Ogham in their poems as some modern druids suggest. In fact, they strived to avoid Ogham kennings. Only this can account for the relatively few Ogham kennings in the surviving poetry. Those poems in which we find kennings aren't the best examples of Irish poetry, they are the worst. A poem depending entirely upon kennings and listings taken from this system wouldn't be a masterpiece; it would be hack verse, which any third year fili could write. This, in turn, explains why the Ogham variants were kept secret; how better to cultivate an air of superiority than to conceal the system from the non-fili? Keeping the non-poet ignorant of the system meant keeping the masses in check; exactly as the fili did. Also, notice the fili's total disregard for the poetic opinion of the masses. The fili

wrote for each other and didn't care what the non-poet thought of their work. They often had to explain their own poems to the non-poet because the non-poet was unfamiliar with the system and was unable to judge good poetry from bad.

Dichetal do Chennaib seems to prove the case and also suggests that this memory system is much closer to the fifth century than the fourteenth. Dichetal do Chennaib is "recital from the finger-ends" in which the poet recites an impromptu poem by somehow consulting his fingertips. Cormac's Glossary flatly states that Dichetal do Chennaib allowed the poet to create a poem instantly and without study. This is because the poet is counting off the Ogham on his fingertips and reciting the rhyming letter attributes derived from the Ogham ciphers. There is nothing mystical, or even religious, in this method. A poet reciting a poem upon the Irish character Balor could quickly count off on his fingers and rhyme Balor to a relevant fortress, church, and bird from his memorized list of Ogham variations. The result wouldn't be a deeply esoteric poem of druidic mysticism. It would be a piece of hack poetry based on commonly known Ogham associations. Dichetal do Chennaib's non-religious purpose is proven by the fact that St. Patrick allowed its practice even after the introduction of Christianity. He had banned *Imbas Forosnai* and *Teinm Laegda* for their paganism but apparently Patrick realized that Dichetal do Chennaib was non-religious in function; it was merely counting off on your fingers as you reviewed the ogham listings during recitation. Patrick knew he had to retain this system; it was the foundation of Irish memory training and therefore the core of Irish education itself. Patrick Joyce came near the truth when he said Dichetal do Chennaib was "the utterance of an extempore prophecy or poem that seems to have been accomplished with the aid of mnemonic contrivance of some sort in which the fingers played a principle part." Joyce also mentions that "the fingers were used as a mnemonic aid in the pagan Dichetal do Chennaib."



A rock with Ogham in Ireland.

Now we begin to understand the vague references within the *Book of Ballymote*, which imply Ogham hand signaling between the fili. Undoubtedly, this is a reference to the habit of counting on the fingers as the fili mentally cycles through his memorized Ogham lists. A fili mentally consulting the Ogham while reciting may very well count upon his fingers during recital. Another poet who observes him could easily reconstruct his thoughts because he also knew the relevant Ogham lists. Thus, one poet watching another count off his fingers could simultaneously arrive at the same rhyming word. If he blurted it out before his partner it would appear to the ignorant observer that the two men had secretly communicated the word from one to the other. To see this method in action simply stand in a crowd and count upon your fingers while reciting: "thirty days hath September". Inevitably someone will join the rhyme and this would appear to be the result of secret communication to any observers unfamiliar with the poem.

This finger counting method, incidentally, destroys the assertion that druids and later fili could conduct two different conversations at once; one verbally and another via signaling. Macalister suggests that such methods were possible and that the

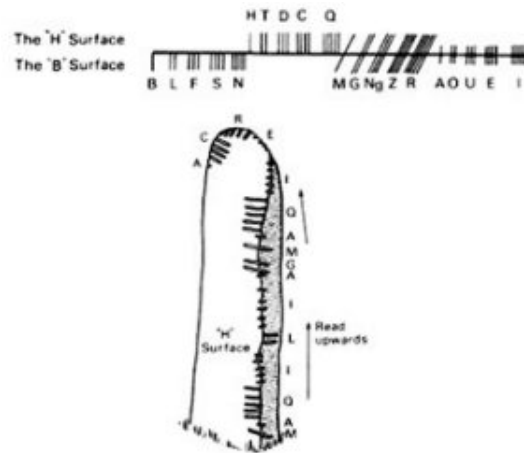
fili could verbally say one thing while secretly conveying a contradictory meaning to a fellow poet via signaling. This was manifestly impossible. If the poet said anything during his finger counting it would most likely be a muttered recital of the Ogham listings he was reviewing. The ability to count off Ogham listings while simultaneously speaking on an entirely different subject is unrealistic. The fili could no more review their Ogham listings during conversation than a modern English speaker could find the fifteenth letter of the alphabet without muttering the entire alphabet under the breath and counting off his fingers until reaching the correct letter. Attempting to count off the English alphabet while discussing any other subject proves this.

If this theory is correct one question remains: why does the Auraicept mention "shin Ogham", "nose Ogham" and other Ogham signaling performed against various straight, flat surfaces? Is it possible that these methods were used as subtle prompts to reciting fili from an observing colleague? Impromptu recitals were part of the fili's final testing and demonstrated his mastery of the one hundred and fifty Ogham listings. Possibly a floundering fili received assistance from a colleague during his testing. Likewise, this signaling could be used during critical public recitals, thereby protecting the integrity of the fili order as a whole. This silent coaching was a far cry from the blatant signals flashed between coaches and players in modern baseball and is more akin to the modern practice of lawyers secretly prompting their clients during court testimony or the subtle cues used between celebrities and talk show hosts to ensure a smooth dialogue during live performance.

When did this system develop? If this interpretation of Dichetal do Chennaib is correct then this system must have been in place by Patrick's time at least; putting it contemporary with the majority of the known Ogham inscriptions. Significantly, this puts us in a druidic time frame and suggests the possibility that the Ogham memory system retains some druidic impact. It certainly did at some point but these druidic traits may not have lasted long enough to be well recorded in the fourteenth century. Ogham as a memory system may have been in decline in the fourteenth century and the manuscript tradition doesn't necessarily reflect earlier (more druidic) usage. By the time Ogham was put on paper it was being used for memory training and was clearly subjected to various corruptions, regardless of what it may have been before that. These corruptions included not only continual modernization which moved it further and further away from its origins, but also attempts to restore the more pagan aspects which the later scribes believed were lost; Irish scribes possibly held some fairly inaccurate conceptions of their ancestors much as their Welsh brothers did. Lastly, the Ogham system was corrupted by other memory systems; mainly the cabal.

It seems that few people have commented upon the cabalistic influences within the Auraicept: the building of the tower, the dispersal of languages, and the 72 poets who collected the languages (led by Fenius Farsaidh, a descendant of Noah). All of this is cabalistic. By the time the Book of Ballymote was compiled all of these elements had already appeared in those cabalistic texts pouring out of Spain and France. This exact same story was used to account for the creation of Hebrew and the secret preservation of the cabal through the descendants of Noah. Certainly, this tradition isn't Celtic and the Celts wouldn't have credited the creation of Gaelic to a descendant of Noah on the plain of Shinar unless they were trying to tie their own beliefs into a Judeo-Christian system. It's been argued that the Auraicept contains intentional deception but that's almost beside the point. We're not concerned with whether or not the Irish believed the story; the mere fact that they knew the tale and included it proves cabalistic impact. Regardless of whether the

author believed it or not he obviously drew from contemporary cabalistic sources of the time.



Also, few neopagans notice that the Auraicept contains Hebrew and runes as well. It's plain as day in Calder's translations. Page 313 lists both Hebrew and "Scandinavian Ogham" (runes). The 84th example in Calder's reproduction is listed as Hebrew and below it appears a similar script; perhaps a corrupt Hebrew variant. Calder lists it as "unnamed". There's other strange looking alphabets listed in Ballymote that are obviously not Ogham. Nor do they look like Hebrew, or any of the more commonly found magical alphabets (Celestial, Theban, Malachim, "Passing the River"). Page 307 reproduces three enclosed figures; two of which are often reproduced in modern neopagan texts. The third figure is seldom addressed. Why has it been ignored so often? Because it's not as intelligible as the other two. It resembles a magic circle taken from cabalistic text.

How much cabalistic contamination was there? Nobody knows but the fact that the two systems were merged at all indicates that the author of the Auraicept was at least partially familiar with both systems and saw a need to tie Ogham traditions into the contemporary Judeo-Christian system. Was he fleshing out a partial Ogham tradition with cabalism or was he attempting to compare Ogham tradition to the more popular cabal? Either way, the Auraicept strives to put Ogham on equal footing with the cabal, if not to supersede it entirely. Apparently, the Irish fili were not going to accept the importation of a foreign memory system without some compromise. The Auraicept dismisses Hebrew as the language "some say...the people of heaven had" and proceeds to offer Gaelic as the new divine language. The final result was a partial merger of these systems as the Celts struggled to tie Celtic history into biblical history at a time when biblical history was blindly accepted as the final word.

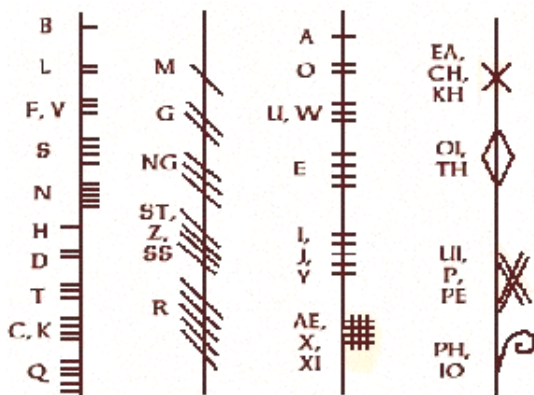
If all of this is correct, what is proven? The argument that Ogham memory training was a late invention completely modeled upon the cabal and earlier Greek memory methods seems faulty and can't be supported from the text of the Auraicept alone. The Auraicept's scribe certainly didn't create this system from Ogham in an attempt to create a native equivalent to the cabal; some sort of system already existed. If the theory of Dichetal do Chennaib is correct then Ogham memory training obviously predates any cabalistic impact; and we do know that the druids were respected for their amazing memory and they must have had some sort of system. Conversely, it could be argued that the manuscript tradition of Ogham is almost a complete rewrite of Ogham traditions. If Welsh bards could project their own misconceptions of their druidic past into their poetry then the same thing might have

happened in Irish manuscripts as well. Maybe an Ogham memory system existed in the fifth century and by the fourteenth century it was so corrupt that what we have today is mostly cabalistic corruption and recreations of what the Irish believed they had lost.

Incidentally, *Carmina Gadelica* contains the following prayer;

Uiriell shall be at my feet
 Ariell shall be at my back
 Gabriel shall be at my head
 Raphael shall be at my side

It's unknown how long the Scots had this poem before *Carmina Gadelica* published it but nearly the same prayer is found in cabalistic literature. If nothing else it proves that cabalism was accepted into folk beliefs as authentic tradition at some point. Certainly, this predates W.B. Yeats and the Golden Dawn; although that doesn't necessarily push it back to before the fourteenth century.



Lastly, someone more familiar with Celtic literature could argue that this Ogham memory system traveled from Ireland to Wales. The Irish impact on the Mabinogion is well established. Some Welsh poetry seems to be modeled upon the Irish as well. T.G. Jones argues that Welsh poetic laws are based upon the Irish and there was communication between the two schools in the middle ages. We know the Bardic system lasted longer in Ireland and it was stronger there too. The lowest ranked Irish bard still ranked higher in courts than the highest ranked Welsh bard. It seems that at some point Welsh bardism was revived with a strong infusion of the Irish system. Some of the Welsh poetic rules appear to be weaker version of the rules within the *Auraicept* and it's possible that the Welsh had adopted some memory system as well; possibly based on Ogham, although it's unlikely. There's no known Ogham kennings in Welsh poetry but there are superficial similarities, which suggest they were copying the general idea: tree symbolism, finger counting, and rigid similes similar to kennings but lacking a concrete system. A Welsh poem cited in *Barddas* suggests that Wales had an identical system: "A didactic bard...on the fingers it is necessary to question him". The Welsh hero Hu Gadarn supposedly wrote the first Welsh mnemonic poem and his follower, Tydain, made such mnemonic poetry the primary method of record keeping. *Barddas* is a faulty document but it could at least suggest that Morganwg himself saw the memory applications of Ogham or Dichetal do Chennaib and tried to introduce them into Welsh bardism. Someone at sometime certainly saw the memory aspect and tried to put it into the Welsh system.

Calder, George, ed and trans. Auraicept na N'Eces. Edinburgh: Four Courts, 1995
Carmichael, Alexander. Carmina Gadelica. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928
Jones, T. Gwynn. "Bardism and Romance." Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion. London, 1915. 205-310.
Joyce, Patrick Weston. A Social History of Ireland. 2 vols. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968
Macalister, R. A. S. Secret Languages Of Ireland, The. Amsterdam: Philo, 1976



Bricriu building his drinking hall.

Bricriu's Bluff and Bluster

Based on Perudo and Liar's Dice and Bluff
 (Dice and cups available commercially)
 By Mike Scharding, 2004
 Color board printout at
www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bricriu.jpg

Objective

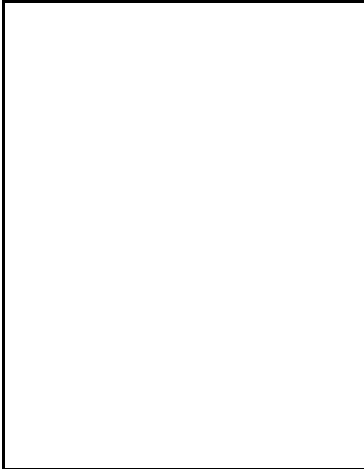
Bricriu, the trickster god of Irish legends, is holding the Trickster Convention, and has invited other trouble-making spirits from other parts of the world to exchange schemes, ploys and devious ideas. At the end he reveals a new tournament to decide where the next convention will be held in the next century. The game is played in a golden palace with 20 white shields and 10 red shields hanging on hooks upon the walls of the hall. Bricriu addresses the assembly and says the purpose of the game is to see who is the more conniving and devious spirit.

The goal is to be the last player to have at least one die in play. A game is played in rounds by two to six players (four or five is best) and takes 30-40 minutes for a full game. During each round, the players roll their dice, an opening bid is made, and play continues as the bid is raised until it is challenged, and the challenge is resolved. Players lose dice for incorrect bids or challenges. Once a player has lost all of their dice, they are out of the game.

Preparation

Print a color version of the board and laminate it. Collect five dice for each player. (30 white dice) Have one colored dice as a bid marker (preferably red). One plastic opaque cup for each player (six cups)

Game Board



Click on this weblink for a color print out
www.geocities.com/mikerdna/bricriu.jpg

The Red Die

Players will place this dice on the bidding circles track to declare their bids and make it easier to keep track.

The Bidding Circles Track

This is the white and red circle shields that ring the board. As the bids are called and raised, the red die is moved sun-wise (clockwise) on the bidding spaces around the track. Players declare their bids by placing the red die on either Number Bid circles or Magic One Bid circles allowing all players to decide whether its time to raise a bid or challenge. (If the bid, for some reason, goes above 20 White circles or 10 Red circles, just keep going around the board adding 20 (or 10) to the number written on the board.)

The Lost Dice Squares

Players place any dice that they have lost on these squares, where they will remain out of play. This aids other players to keep track of how many dice are in play or out of play; making bid calculations more simple.

The White Dice

Players will bid on ALL white dice in play, including those in their own cup (or those show outside the cup, but in play.) Dice on Lost Dice Squares do not affect game play. The single pip on the dice is a "Magic One." and will change to match the number called on any bid, without control of the die's owner.

Game Rules

0. Choose the First Bidder of the Game

Every one rolls all five of their dice, to determine who will start the game. The person with the highest total will start and then proceed clockwise around the table. Ties are re-rolled.

1. Roll the Dice

We begin. All players take a dice cup and five white dice. They shake their dice and give them a roll, but do not let their opponents see what they have rolled. Keep them concealed under the cups. You may peek in your cup as often as you like, but secrecy is a critical aspect of Bricriu's Bluff & Bluster!

2. Opening Bid

The first player can declare any amount of numbers (or Magic Ones) as their opening bid, even if they didn't roll that many. You base your bid on your estimate of all dice in play. There are two types of opening bids; Number Bids and Magic Ones Bids.

Number Bids:

The white shields along the bidding circle track are for Number Bids. A Number Bid is a claim that revealing all of the dice in play (your dice and your opponents') will show a particular number (Magic Ones count towards the number called, being like jokers in a deck of cards.) All matching number and Magic Ones on the white dice count together toward a Number Bid.

For example, if you have three 5s and your three opponents each have one Magic One (but no 5s), there are really six 5s in play (5+5+5+1+1+1). After reading your opponent's eyes for weakness, declare your bid by placing the red die with a six facing up on the white "5" shield circle.

Magic Ones Bids:

Red shields are used for Magic One Bids. A Magic One Bid is a claim that revealing all of the dice in play (your dice as well as those of your opponents) will show a particular amount of Magic Ones. Only Magic Ones will count toward a Magic One Bid, but this gives you another option in bidding and bluffing your opponents in tight situations.

For example: If you have three Magic Ones in your hand and you suspect that your other opponents each have a Magic One in their hand, then it is reasonable to advance the red die around the Bidding Circles Track to the red "6" shield circle and have the red die face upwards with a Magic One on it.

3. Bluff, Bluster and Raise

After the opening bid is made, play continues clockwise to the next surviving player. You cannot pass. Each player in succession will have only two options that they can make:

- A. Raise the current bid, or
- B. Challenge the current bid.

Remember, all the white dice in play, both yours and the dice held by other players, even the dice you can't see should be considered when you calculate to raise the bid. It's okay to bluff and bluster, and setting the next bid just a bid higher than the true odds, will force the next person into a difficult dilemma of whether to risk a challenge or raise it to even more ridiculous odds. Don't make it an easy decision for them.

Raising the Bid

Raising the bid is the key to strategy. Depending on your opponents' bidding and the dice showing in your cup, you can raise the bid in a few different ways.

- A. Either keep the red die on the same bidding circle, or turn it to show a higher number on the die. (For example, if your opponent's poor bid was four 3s, then you can raise that with a daring bid of four 4s, four 5s, or four 6s.)
- B. Or, move the red die clockwise to any higher Number Bid circle (White), and turn the dice to show any number you want on top. (For example, if your opponent declares a bid of four 3s, then you can upset

the game by confidently bidding five 2s, six 5s, seven 3s, and so on.)

- C. Or, move the red die clockwise to any Magic One Bid circle (Red) and turn the red die to show a Magic One on the top. For instance, if your opponent declares a bid of five 3s, counter his impetuous bid with a bid of three Magic Ones (or even four Magic Ones), since it is in a position on the Bidding Circle Track that is higher (i.e. clockwise) from the already declared bid.

NOTE: If you are playing by the Show and Reroll rule, after your bid you should immediately announce or execute this maneuver before the next player makes their call.

Bid raises continue to rise from one player to the next until challenged.

Challenging the Bid

If you don't think there are enough white dice in play to support the latest bid, then you can challenge the bid rather than raise it. You can only challenge a bid on your turn, and must loudly and clearly call out the word "Challenge" or "call" for everyone to reveal their dice. This decision cannot be reversed or recalled.

4. Resolving the Challenge and Ending the Round

Once a player has challenged a bid, all players lift their cups and reveal their dice to everyone. Count all the dice in play that match the bid; numbers and Magic Ones for Number Bids; or Magic Ones only for Magic One Bids.

After you count the total, it is time to determine who lost.

A. If the actual amount of dice is equal to or more than the bid amount, the challenger loses the challenge, and forfeits one die, and puts the dice on the Lost Dice Track in the middle of the board, and drinks once.

B. If the actual amount of dice is less than the bid amount, the bidder loses the challenge, and forfeits one die, and puts the dice on the Lost Dice Track in the middle of the Board, and drinks once.

C. If you are player by the optional Special Rule "Perfect Bid," and the bid is exactly the same as the bid amount, then everyone but the bidder loses a die and drinks. This rule tends to unbalance the game's odds quickly, but is enjoyable because you get to berate the challenger verbally.



Challenge Examples:

Example One:

You challenge a bid of ten 5s. When all the white dice are counted, there are eight 5s and four Magic Ones. That's twelve 5 in all, two more than the bid amount. Therefore the bidder was right; there were at least ten 5 in play. So you lose the challenge and place one of your dice on the Lost Dice Track.

Example Two:

You challenge a bid of five Magic Ones. When the dice are counted, there are four Magic Ones. You win the challenge.

The bidder loses the challenge and surrenders one die to a Lost Dice square.

5. Next Round

After the challenge is resolved either way it is time for the next round and the red die is reset to the white "1" circle with a one facing up. All load the dice you still have into your cup and roll again, as in the beginning. The player who won the last round takes the red die and starts the bidding in the new round. Bidding, of course, can begin anywhere on the bidding track.

Game continues until people run out of dice.



SPECIAL OPTIONAL RULES

Mix and match these rules to the players' preferences.

Show and Re-roll Rule

This is great for confusing your opponents. Immediately after opening or raising a bid, you may put one or more of your dice outside your cup for all players to see, then reroll and hide all of your remaining dice. Any rerolled dice that match your bid (if challenged) will count towards it. Showing and rerolling can therefore improve your chance of winning a possible challenge.

You can show any amount of dice outside of your cup, as long as you have at least one die left to reroll. The dice shown does not have to match your bid at all, but that may help to convince the next player. The dice outside your cup remain there for the rest of the round, and count towards any future challenge, and can not be returned to your cup until the next round, possibly inhibiting your options, if the bid should revolve around the table to you again.

Perfect Bid Rule

If the amount of dice is exactly the same as the bid amount, everyone except the bidder loses the challenge, and must forfeit a die to the Lost Dice Track and drink once. This often unbalances a game, on average people will lose two or three dice in the game to this rule, if used, lowering the strategy quotient in the game. You could also have dice lost only by challenger and ALL but bidder must drink once, which is more fair.

Die Hard Rule (Corollary to Perfect Bid Rule)

You cannot lose your last die when there is a perfect bid, unless you are the player who is actually challenging the bid.

For example, you have one die left. Alex has four dice, Sue and Susan both have two, Shane challenges Sue's bid of eight 4s. There are exactly eight 4s shown. Normally in this situation, all players except Sue would have to surrender one die each, but under the Die Hard rule, because you didn't call the challenge, you are saved and can keep your final die.

Big Miss Rule

The difference between the actual amount of dice and the bid affects the number of dice lost. If there are more dice than the bid called, the losing challenger loses the difference in dice to the center track (if he challenges seven 5s, and there are nine 5s, then the challenger loses two dice (nine minus seven = two.)) If the bidder bids seven 5s and there are actually four 5s, then the bidder loses three dice (seven minus four = three.)

News

Pagan Fire Festival Reignites with a Fee

By Alastair Jamieson

From The Scotsman

Thu 19 Feb 2004,

<http://thescotsmen.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=196812004>

THE Beltane Fire Festival, which heralds the arrival of spring with spectacular traditional dancing, is to return to Edinburgh after organisers struck a deal with the council to lease Calton Hill for a night.

The agreement, which puts the boisterous all-night event on a formal footing for the first time, will mean revellers from around the world being charged between £2 and £4 to go on to the hill to watch the celebrations.

Last year's event was cancelled for the first time in its 15-year history after council officials insisted the Beltane Fire Society needed a public entertainment licence.

It is understood councillors wanted the celebration to "grow up" and become more professional following complaints about excessive drinking, noise and risks to public safety.

The number of people attending the event, which has attracted crowds of 15,000 in the past, will be limited to 12,000 as part of the new arrangement.

A council insider said: "The event is fantastic and it is great to be supporting it again on a proper, contractual level. There were concerns that there was no control over anything and that people were just turning up and getting completely out of their heads.

"There were people so drunk that they were waking up on the hill the following morning."

The event is now expected to go ahead this year, with organisers agreeing to a string of conditions imposed by Edinburgh City Council.

As well as the limit on numbers, the festival will be forced to finish at 1am and provide stewarding to ensure crowd safety. The deal is expected to be approved by councillors at a meeting next week.

Organisers are introducing the entrance charge to meet the cost of providing stewards.

Ricky Henderson, the city council's leisure leader, said: "There will be some fairly robust conditions placed on their licence."



The fire festival, which takes place on the night of 30 April, features 300 performers and celebrates the beginning of summer in the old Celtic calendar. Staged at Calton Hill since

1988, it is the biggest Beltane celebration in the UK and attracts visitors from all over the world.

Beltane, which has strong undertones of fertility, has significance for pagans, who believe that the event marks the "coming of age" of the gods born at the previous corresponding winter solstice.

Dougie Kerr, the Calton ward councillor, said this year's event was the organisers' last chance to prove they could operate the festival without disruption to neighbours.

Mr Kerr said: "If it's going to come back, I'm determined it's going to come back on a proper footing. It has caused a number of problems in the past and it's not just problems to the residents. I have been seriously concerned about public safety at this event and I think in the past it has been non-existent."

But Mr. Henderson said organisers realized there would have to be controls to ensure the festival runs smoothly.

"I think the impression the officials have got from dealing with the Beltane Fire Society is that people seem to be far more serious and professional in their approach," he said.

The Beltane Fire Society has also agreed to stop the use of drums at 1am and finish cleaning Calton Hill by 9am the following day.

Steve Cardownie, the Deputy Lord Provost and champion of the Edinburgh Festival, said: "This has the potential to be a great event and can be an important part of Edinburgh's portfolio of festivals. It has always been popular, but there has been a need to improve the public safety. Hopefully, Beltane will remain an important part of the city's calendar of celebrations."

The Beltane Fire Society was unavailable for comment yesterday.

The Beltane Fire Festival takes the form of a procession which snakes around the hill between points entitled fire, air, earth and water.

The name is thought to have derived from a Gaelic-Celtic word meaning "bright/sacred fire". It was held to mark and celebrate the blossoming of spring, and coincided with the ancient pastoral event of moving livestock to summer grazing. It was a celebration of the fertility of the land and animals.

Historically, the Beltane festival was the primary focus of a community's year. Before the Romans divided the seasons into a calendar of 12 months, the Celtic year was marked by four quarter days: Beltane, Lughnasadh, Samhuinn and Imbolc. Of these, Beltane was the most frequently and significantly celebrated.



Druids Want Involvement at Stonehenge Project

From This is Bristol, March 2, 2004.

<http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/site/458#news>

Druid leaders yesterday called for the creation of a sacred site at Stonehenge for the re-burial of human remains unearthed during a unique road project in the area. They want a parcel of land near the "powerful temple of our heritage" to be set aside as a ceremonial shrine for the Pagan and Druid communities. They also hope to carry out important rituals at key stages of the

proposed Stonehenge Tunnel construction, such as the first ground breaking "to ease ancestral spirits". And they want to be informed of any archaeological discoveries during the £193million A303 road scheme in the World Heritage Site.

The Druid Network told a public inquiry they were in favour of the 4,500-year-old stone circle being returned to its natural setting without nearby roads and visitor centre. But they are concerned about various aspects of the proposed project, which is the subject of a 10-week public inquiry in Salisbury. Giving evidence for the network, Emma Restall Orr said the scheme "lacks any acknowledgement of this ancient site's significance as a working temple for existing spiritual and religious communities".

She said: "A major concern is the potential lack of respect given to our ancestors and their physical remains." Such problems could be diverted if "the sanctity of the temple" was acknowledged and respected throughout the work.

Ms Restall Orr said the Druids wanted to carry out their rituals at important stages of the three-year construction programme. These include the first sod-cutting and when the work nears sensitive sites such as Longbarrow Crossroads, the Avenue and the Heel Stone. Rituals were also required at times of significant archaeological finds during tunnelling at the heritage site, especially the uncovering of human remains.

She said: "Of particular concern are human remains. "We seek assurances that any Pagan human remains found during the work are treated with appropriate respect. While we do not wish to stop the archaeologists from gaining knowledge, removing human remains to store in museums is no longer acceptable within international Pagan communities. All human remains must be reburied with the appropriate Pagan ritual as close to the site of discovery as possible, together with their grave goods - or appropriate facsimiles. We would support the setting aside of a piece of land within the World Heritage Site that could act as a ceremonial funerary shrine for the Pagan and Druid communities. This could be used not only for the reburial of the ancient dead, but also as a place of honouring the dead within many modern spiritual communities."



Calif. County Votes to Ban Biotech

Wed Mar 3, 2004

By Paul Elias, AP Biotechnology Writer

UKIAH, Calif. AP)—Mendocino County voters approved the nation's first ban on the raising and keeping of genetically engineered crops or animals.

The vote Tuesday represented a big black eye for the biotechnology industry, which spent more than \$500,000 to defeat the measure in a county of 47,000 registered voters.

"They had the money, we had the people," said Els Cooperrider, who led the local ballot measure.

With 97 percent of precincts reporting, Measure H had support from 56 percent of voters in the area known for its wineries.

Opponents of the measure could not be immediately reached for comment. Their campaign headquarters in Ukiah was vacant with a "for lease" sign on it.

Led by organic vintners and farmers, backers of the ban raised and spent close to \$100,000.

The ban will have little direct effect inside Mendocino County, since there are no known genetically modified crops raised in the area.

But Mendocino County's organic growers said they would use the law as a marketing tool, especially in Europe, where opposition to genetically engineered foods is fierce.

The victory is also expected to embolden similar movements in neighboring Northern California counties as well as elsewhere in the county.

The biotechnology industry may file a lawsuit trying to overturn the new law. The industry argued that biotechnology regulation should be left to the federal government, otherwise biotech companies will have to wade through a hodgepodge of local laws.

Editor's note: This reminds us of the old ad campaign "It's not nice to fool Mother Nature." Communities are starting to stand up to the biotechnology industry and their bio-engineered foods. We don't know what the long term effects are on our bodies, neighboring plants, the environment. Best to leave well enough alone.

Announcements



Psychic Eye Book Shop Closing

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT
THE SAN FRANCISCO PSYCHIC EYE BOOK SHOP
WILL BE CLOSING.

We will continue to be open during this closing process, which should carry us through the next two to three weeks. Unfortunately, due to the state of the economy, it has come down to this, but we will endeavor to return to the San Francisco Bay area as soon as is humanly possible.

We have valued your continued patronage over the years, and we will continue to offer most of our merchandise via our website <http://www.pebooks.com/shop/> (tax-free to California residents) and our remaining 8 locations will of course continue to offer readings, both in person and over the telephone. If anyone has any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to e-mail us at chris@pebooks.com.



2004 CSANA Conference

The 2004 CSANA conference will be held April 15-18, 2004 on the campus of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, co-hosted by the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, and the Celtic Studies Program, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. The conveners are David Klausner of the Centre for Medieval Studies and Ann Dooley of the Celtic Studies Program. St. Michael's College is located on the east side of the university campus, in the heart of downtown Toronto in a park-like setting that is close to museums, shopping, restaurants and art galleries, all easily accessible by public transportation (TTC).

Confirmed participants include Pádraig Ó Riain of University College Cork, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh of the University of Cambridge, and Graham Isaac, John Koch and Brynley Roberts of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Travel:

For those arriving by air, a taxi from Pearson International Airport to the University of Toronto costs approximately \$40.00. Pacific Western operates coach service from the airport to the major downtown hotels approximately every half hour at a cost of \$14.95 one-way (\$25.75 return). The closest drop-off hotel is the Delta Chelsea Inn on Gerrard Street West; from there it is a short taxi ride to the university campus and the conference hotels. Or, for \$2.25 exact change, and a possible wait, one can take the Airport Rocket Shuttle to the Kipling subway station and take the subway from there to either the St. George stop (exit at St. George, turn left, and walk south to Bloor, then turn right and walk west on Bloor for Quality Hotel Midtown) or to the Bay St. stop (exit at Cumberland for the Howard Johnson hotel, walk left to Avenue, turn right, and walk north on Avenue); the hotels are a short walk from their respective stops.

Accommodation:

Arrangements have been made with two local area hotels. Please make your own reservations. Cut-off date for room bookings at the conference rate is March 15.

Quality Hotel Midtown
280 Bloor Street West (at St. George Street)
Cost: Cdn.\$109.00 + taxes per night
Phone: 1-800-228-5151 or 416-968-0010
and quote "CSANA Conference - Group No. 102035"

Howard Johnson Hotel 89 Avenue Road
(North of Bloor Street)
Cost: Cdn.\$89.00 + taxes per night
Phone: 1-800-446-4656 or 416-964-1220 and quote "CSANA Conference"

Conference Schedule:

All sessions will take place at Robert Madden Hall on the main floor of Carr Hall, 100 St. Joseph Street, St. Michael's College.

Thursday, April 15

1.30 p.m.-5 p.m. Registration and sessions 6-7.30 p.m. Reception: (Charbonnel Lounge, Elmsley Hall, 81 St. Mary Street) Optional evening event: Traditional music session at Dora Keogh's Pub, 141 Danforth Avenue

Friday, April 16

9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sessions (break for lunch 12.30-2 p.m.) 7.30 p.m. Chinese banquet (prior registration required)

Saturday, April 17

9 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Sessions (break for lunch 12.30-2 p.m.) Optional evening event: Informal gathering at McVeigh's New Windsor Irish Tavern, 124 Church Street

Sunday, April 18

10 a.m.-1.30 p.m. Sessions



Registration:

The registration fee is \$30.00 (student rate \$20.00). Registration for the Friday night banquet is also required (\$30.00).

We encourage you to register by Friday, April 2, 2004 so that accurate arrangements may be made. Please make cheques payable to "Celtic Conference" and mail with registration form to:

Jean Talman
Celtic Studies
St. Michael's College
81 St. Mary Street
Toronto, ON M5S 1J4
CANADA
Phone: 416-926-7145
Email: jean.talman@utoronto.ca
Fax: 416-926-2330

The Celtic Cauldron of Creation

A Shamanic Retreat Exploring the Spirit-Powers of Dana Facilitated by Tom Cowan (author of Fire in the Head) and Frank MacEowan Assisted by Susan McClellan

Long before the arrival of the Gaels, an ancient race of people inhabited Ireland known through oral traditions and written history as the Tuatha De Danann, or the Shining Ones. This mystical race may have originated in the primal forests of Old Europe, somewhere in a Celtic Otherworld manifesting along the Danube. The Dananns were highly attuned to the mysterious elements of nature, possessed advanced spiritual powers, and may have been attempting to bring forth an enlightened society on Earth, as other mystical races around the world are thought to have been attempting in the dreamtimes of their own cultures.



A Druid Missal-Any
P.O. Box 5003
Elmwood Station
Berkeley, CA 94705
E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

In this weeklong retreat we will delve deeply into the ancient mysteries surrounding the Dananns and look at how their unique culture and spirituality shaped the beliefs and practices of the later Celtic peoples of Ireland and Britain. Our intention will be to prepare ourselves to be skillful recipients of the potent spiritual forces the Dananns tended in their own lands and within themselves, and which are still accessible to us. It is our belief that the Dananns are initiating people in our own day to preserve and carry forth their wisdom and spiritual knowledge for the sake of humanity and the nonhuman communities of life on our Mother, the Earth.



We will trace and track the dana energies as they reveal themselves in the Three Cauldrons of the Soul, as they help to shape the Wheel of the Four Airts, and as they originate in the Primal Mother Spirit called Danu or Dana by those earliest Celtic peoples. Through ritual and ceremony, we'll contact the Dana life-force behind the spirits of nature in our own lands so that we may become better healers and seers. By drumming, dancing, and dreaming we will spend intimate time with the dana energies and allow them to initiate us into the mysteries that the Shining Ones are calling back into the visible world for its renewal and transformation, not to mention our own.

TWO LOCATIONS:

August 18-22, 2004 near Denver, Colorado. Contact: Cynthia McMahan at 303-726-8508 or drummingcircles@yahoo.com

September 22-26, 2004 Kirkridge near Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Contact: Susan McClellan at 302-478-6844 or kwahul@aol.com

Calendar

The Vernal Equinox, when the Sun crosses the equator, will occur on March 19, at 10:49 p.m. PST. The Sun rises due East and sets due West today and the Night equals the Day. Balanced now are we!

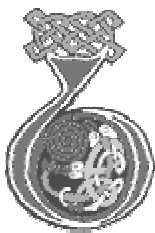
A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

A Druid Missal-Any Beltane Year XLII Vol. 20 Number 3 May 1st, 2004 c.e.



Beltane Essay: Shafts and Gatherings

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Beltane 1983
By Emmon Bodfish



Beltaine, one of the greatest, and, now-a-days, best known, of the Old Celtic High Days, it marks the beginning of Samhradh, summer, and the "Season of Life." Historically, it signaled the moving of the herds out to summer pastures in the mountains. Great fires were built to welcome back the Sun, and the cattle were driven through the flames for purification before starting on their way to the high meadows. The Druid caste,

priests and priestesses, presided over these rites at which all the clans gathered together at the ritual sites such as Tara and Carnutes for celebration, planning, and deliberation. Quarrels were settled and justice meted out. This was another Druid function, that of magistrate, with a specialized sub-group of the priestly class acting as judges. Sacrifices were offered to Belenos and on the Continent, to Gaulish and Galatian analogs of this Indo-European Sky God. Another opinion holds that this derivation of Beltaine from the name of a sun god, Beal, is problematical, and that Beltaine was, like Samhain, a festival of all the Gods and Goddesses.

For the New Reformed Druids of North America, it is the beginning of the Season of Life and the end of the Season of Sleep. The first spirits of the year will be added to the Chalice of Waters that is shared at each service, and the Third Order members will change their ceremonial ribbons, worn over the fronts of their robes, from white to red ribbons. The Earth Mother wakes from her winter sleep, and chants and praises are addressed to her.

Live Oak Grove plans to inaugurate the shaft grave, a Toll-Uaigh; we have dug this winter at Larry Press's (Archdruid) instigation, with an offering of some of the new Waters of Life from the first chalice of the new season. Shaft graves were built in Ancient Gaul, and perhaps elsewhere in Druidic lands. Offerings presumably to the Earth Mother, were put into these deep shafts at different times over a long period. Some of the "Tolls" were twelve meters deep, and offerings might include a whole tree. We plan to offer a piece of the sacrifice at each

service which will be put into the shaft after the rest of the sacrifice has been placed in the altar fire.



News of the Groves

Galatia Grove: News from Turkey

We, The Grove of Galatia assembled accept the following principles as self evident: 1. The object of the search for religious truth, which is a universal and a never-ending search, may be found through the Earth Mother, which is Nature; but this is one way, yea, one way among many. 2. And great is the importance, which is of a spiritual importance, of Nature, which is the Earth Mother; for it is one of the objects of Creation, and with it we do live, yea, even as we do struggle through life are we come face to face with it.

The Grove Constitution will be forwarded to you within one or two days by the Secretary Rev. Ozturk Kosemen. At present the Grove has two Joint Archdruids elected by the membership Rev. M. Graham MacKenzie-Rolls and Rev. John Roderick Clay. Our High Priestess is the Rev. Ayshe Dikman. Our Chief Bard and Secretary is Rev Ozturk Kosemen. Our Annalist is Deniz Ozguhan. The total membership as of this date is 25. We have 3 Ordained Druids, 2 Ordained Bards and 10 Ovates.

We wish to apply to be recognized as a Proto-Grove or Grove of the RDNA. The Grove is located in Izmit Turkey and is associated with Kocaeli University.

Acorn Grove: News from Ontario

Hello from the, until recently, frosty north. It is Beltane and our last snowfall was just 4 weeks ago. Time for rebirth, renewal, and lots and lots of yard work... Especially when three of the faithful are rather large dogs (Scully, Roswell, Kodiak).

The Acorn Proto-grove has fallen of the RDNA radar screen of late largely due to the fault of the Arch-Druid (pro tem) to read all his email completely and respond to Stacey's call for News... Impeachment proceedings will begin shortly.

The group has had a slow down of activity of the Druiish spirituality sort, but a rapid increase of the daily secular sort, One (Bella) moved to a faraway town, One (Ric) went financially bankrupt, One (Jim) is currently getting a divorce, but curiously Two of them are doing musical comedies (Tim & Ric). Perhaps seeking solace from day to day lives in the limelight of the theatre. Both have secured roles in the Aurora Opera Company's productions of "My Fair Lady" and "Hello Dolly". Neither of them is Dolly.

Of an interesting spiritual note the Dali Lama is coming to town (Toronto) and one of our cohorts (Jen) actually managed to get tickets to go hear him speak. Expect a healthy dose of Tibetan Buddhism to be added to our Zen-Franciscan dialogs in the future.

Plans for the Second Annual Grove Wilderness camp are underway, however, seeing that we are traditional Druids of the Reform, each of us has three or four opinions on where it is we should go. Last year we went to Awenda Provincial Park, this year a private cottage (Trina's) has been offered but plans are still uncertain.

Cheers

Ric Knight odm

Bamboo Grove: News from Delaware

Greetings! The Bamboo Grove has been a bustling place as of late. I recently won a contract bid to work on the Piping Plover Conservation Project; it's a 5 month contract and I will be working for DNREC (the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control). I am extremely excited to be able to put my degree to good use...finally! What's more, this type of work is in sync with my passion and purpose in life, to take an active role in protecting my wild brothers and sisters.

In other news, we have lost some beloved members and gained some new. Spud the mouse passed on after putting up a good fight...his spunk and spirit will truly be missed. The Arch-Druid has been transplanted and will hopefully enjoy being able to stretch its cramped roots. My fiancé and I have set up an aquarium, home now to a varied group of crabs--Fiddlers, Rusty, and Reds--as well as crayfish, guppies, and plecos. Our little condo is feeling more like home!

May you all have a wonderful Spring!

Brightest blessings,
BrightMirage (Maryann)

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

I took time from my intensive Job Search to go down to the National Mall to enjoy the beautiful weather. Hachi, Norway and I attended the opening ceremony of the WWII memorial in Washington DC on April 29th and ceremonially dropped a thimble full of whiskey in the fountain to bless the new site, and pray for the ecological damage to be quickly healed in the area.

In other news, I have been spending a great deal of time reflecting on the role of outreach to the community in a ministerial manner. As the RDNA doesn't have a great deal of public affairs practice or interfaith experience, I've been working with a number of on-line pagan-clergy conferences, talking with elder RDNA priests and writing little essays to clarify my personal thoughts on the likely issues. These might reach the precipitation point by Summer Solstice issue of the Druid Missal-Any.

Dravidia Grove: News from Maryland

Hello all,

Just getting settled in right now, not too much going on here except look for work and I got a chance to go see Thunder Over Louisville which is a big fireworks display they do here every year. It is pretty cool; it even includes an Air Show....Well all that about covers it.

Dolanimus

Nemeton Awenyddion: News from Cohasset, California

Things are finally coming back to life here as the warm sun continues to bless nearly everyday with beauty and the Spring life returns full force. Getting ready for a lively Beltain celebration/campout doing all the stuff, maypole, ritual, Bardic circle, camping, etc. There's more information in our Grove's website if you wish to find out more about our campouts.

Rhiannon

Duir De Danu Grove: News from California

The Hunt is On

And the two, the Co-Arch-Druid and the Preceptor, did hunt for a suitable place for ritual. They rode their fire-chariot on the roads, their only weapon a map showing the parks. But the parks were elusive. Yea they did flee from the people's gaze. Nowhere was there a grove suitable for ritual. But the two hunters pluck up their courage and continue to hunt, ever more determined to find a place for the Grove to meet.

Tegwedd ShadowDancer

Chronicler and Co-ArchDruid of Duir de Danu Grove NRDNA

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

There are a couple of sayings that are fitting for this past year: that which does not kill you makes you stronger, and the deities give you no more than what you can handle. Well, I'm pretty well thrashed physically and mentally and am at the "done" phase, so enough now, for a little while, ok Whichever Deity is Deciding to Test Me?

I negotiated with the new tenant of the main house last week to pay him a small monthly so I can continue to use his water for the grove site, and when it's hot he'll leave the driplines on for a few days. I'm also getting access to the neighbor's barn across the street for grove maintenance supplies. One of the neighbor's will be helping bring the firewood Emmon left me to the new house. How odd that with the timing I have a place to keep it now. Also odd is a sense of being "taken care of," with the acquisition of the house, the chandelier, the drapes, and now the firewood.

In the carpool on the way to work one day this week the radio played strains of "Here comes the Sun, It's all right, it's all right," bringing me out of my reverie of worry as a reminder that Beltaine was coming, the celebration of the return of the sun god Belenos, of the Season of Life, of Summer. It's been a year of travails, and distractions: the death of a parent, the loss of family, the death of a pet, of a good friend, the loss of the cabin by the grove site. The music was a reminder of the Here and Now, of the Bigger Picture, of the Balance that is so easy to forget. Oh Beal, forgive this one due to her own mortal limitations!

On this Beltaine day, whether you celebrate it on the First or astronomically on the Fourth, take some time to go outside, breath in the fresh air, skip around a tree if you don't have a May Pole, take a swig of whiskey, the waters-of-life, and celebrate the waking of the Earth Mother!



A Reformed Druid Anthology 2 Update

Well, with the return of the sun's strength since Yule, we were able to get the massive 850 page Green Book volume of the Anthology done in March by the staff of the East Coast office of the Drynemetum Press. Unfortunately due to some problems in the West Coast office, the Magazine Collection (2nd Volume of ARDA 2) is now 4 weeks behind our previous optimistic projections. Therefore, only 25% of the files are now available on the ARDA 2 website, but glacial progress should speed up with the warming temperatures, and more fortunate luck.

I have revised my estimate for the magazine volume to be 750 pages and it should be done in 6 weeks by the Summer Solstice, if we're lucky. By July, if things continue as they are now. We appreciate your continued patience also in the release of the Main Volume which is similar straits, but you can be assured that once it is in my hands from our associate in the Central Office, it will go fly to the presses within a week!

The website address is

<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/arda.html>



Beltane Jokes

Q: Which brand of clothing would the Cerne Abbas Giant like to wear?

A: Tommy Hilfigur

Q: Which brand of yogurt do Druids love the most?

A: De Dannon



The Difference Between Wicca and Druidism

Because this is an on going topic of question in the pagan community, as people try to find and understand their niche, A Druid Missal-Any offers yet another perspective on the difference between Wicca and Druidism, this time submitted by Founder and Patriarch of the Fifth Order Norm Nelson.

One group says, "By the pricking of my thumbs, something wiccaed this way comes."

The other group says, "By the pricking of my thumbs, something wickered this way comes."

News



Sudden Oak Death Update

Feds Order Inspections of Calif. Nurseries

Fri Mar 26, 2004

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD, Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES - The federal government Friday barred California nurseries from shipping 59 plant species out of state until they can be declared free of a disease that has killed thousands of oaks in California and Oregon.

Beginning Monday, nurseries that want to ship plants that can act as hosts of the fungus-like blight, called "sudden oak death," must undergo inspections before products can leave California, the U.S. Agriculture Department said. The list includes species and subspecies of popular garden plants such as rhododendron, azaleas and camellias.

Similar restrictions have been in place in 12 Northern California counties since 2001.

One industry representative said the decision will delay shipments, but could reopen markets that recently closed to California nurseries.

"A number of states have blockaded California plants from entering. If this causes those states to accept shipments, there are some great benefits that come along with this action," said Tom O'Brien, a lobbyist for the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers.

The announcement came as another setback for California's \$2.35 billion nursery industry, which is also threatened by an invasion of imported red fire ants and other disease-carrying pests.

Nursery plants are the state's third-largest agricultural commodity, behind dairy products and grapes.

In recent weeks, 10 states have restricted the sale of certain host plants, and Florida has banned the import and sale of all nursery plants from California.

The blight, which is related to the type of organism believed to have caused the Irish potato famine in the mid-19th century, does not necessarily kill the shrubs it infects.

No cure has been found for the disease, first spotted in 1995, and it is unclear how it spreads.

On the Net: <http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>



Cell Phones Alter National Park Landscape

Monday, April 12, 2004, 2:05 p.m.
By Becky Bohrer, Associated Press

When Sean Morrissey scaled California's 14,491-foot Mount Whitney for the first time a few years ago, he couldn't wait to take in the view. A woman who made the climb at the same time couldn't wait to dial her cell phone.

"This one woman was making call after call," said Morrissey, who is from Los Gatos, Calif. "It seemed very out-of-place. It seemed out-of-place to go through all that effort to make an outbound call."

Cell phones have long been virtually unavoidable on city streets and in shopping malls. But they now are showing up in some of the very places people go to get away from it all: national parks.

For park managers, this is a challenge. Officials with the National Park Service say they want to meet the needs of visitors and provide for their safety. But they also must protect the park and the visitor experience. And there is no set policy on how to strike this balance.

To some degree, the Park Service is complicit in the problem: At least 15 National Park Service sites have allowed telecommunications companies to put up cell towers within their boundaries. Yellowstone has five. (Also, many towers are situated just outside national parks, enabling park visitors to place calls even from some backcountry areas.)

Some conservationists complain that cell phone technology is ruining nature; not only by scarring the landscape with cell towers (one tower in particular, near Yellowstone's Old Faithful, has been criticized as an eyesore), but also by contributing to the death of solitude.

"It's possible you could come to a trail in Yellowstone and see someone yakking on the phone to their stockbroker," said Dennis McKinney, development director at Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.



Jeffrey Hunter was jolted from his sleep at 6 a.m. by a fellow hiker who used his phone while at a shelter in Great Smoky Mountains National Park to remind his wife to bring sodas when she met him later.

"He woke everybody up in the entire shelter," said Hunter, of Chattanooga, Tenn., who was hiking the Appalachian Trail. "I was incredulous that someone would wake people up for a couple Diet Cokes."

And guide Neil Courtis recalled a private tour he led in Yellowstone National Park last fall that included a business-minded father from New York who was desperately trying to get a cell phone signal so that he could make calls or check his messages.

"When you're trying to give a tour, that's kind of annoying," Courtis said. "It kind of ruined the tour" for the others.

Lane Baker, Yellowstone's deputy chief ranger, said many people expect to be able to use cell phones and that Park Service officials cannot dictate how tourists use them.

"You can't control what they do at Old Faithful like you can't control what they do in downtown New York," she said.

And Baker said cell phones in the park have a definite positive side, making a difference in the way officials receive and respond to emergency calls. "I wouldn't want to do my job without one," Baker said.



Last July, a desperate cell phone call from 13,000 feet on the Grand Teton in Wyoming alerted rescuers that lightning had struck a party of 13 climbers near the summit.

Rangers flew in by helicopter and were able to pluck the most badly injured from the mountain before dark. One climber was killed by the lightning; the others survived.

But on the other side of the equation, Yosemite spokesman Deb Schweizer said the park also has gotten calls from hikers who are simply pooped and want a lift out. They get a polite refusal.

"Just because you're tired doesn't mean we're going to send someone out," she said.

Editor's note: In these times of easy and mindless convenience it is important as Druids to remain mindful and respectful of others who are out to enjoy Nature as well. If you must bring that cell phone while hiking, during grove services, or otherwise spending time in the great outdoors put it on vibrate!

Events



3rd Annual Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration

May 15, 2004, Berkeley, CA

We are pleased to announce our third Annual Parade and Celebration from 10:00am - 5:00pm at the Civic Center Park on MLK between Center and Allston Way. This year our theme is "Divine Feminine", and we have expanded the celebration to include vendors, crafts, and food (positioned nearby). We are also excited to announce that we will be featuring an "Author's Circle," in which you can meet and converse with the Pagan community's leading published Authors. We are continuing to encourage the participation of floats and costumed participants this year, and will offer special awards for both Best Float and Best Costume, so don't miss your chance to show us how creative you can be. Camera Shy? Bring a mask, or come down and cheer the community on...we would definitely love that.

Information: 510-496-6051, paganparade@earthlink.net or visit <http://www.paganparade.org>.



Ancient Ways Festival

June 2 thru 6
Harbin Hot Springs, Middletown, CA

Ancient Ways hosts an eclectic pan pagan gathering of magical folk. Weekend includes workshops, rituals, camping in a clothing optional environment. Cost (before April 15): \$70, 1-night; \$105, 2-nights; \$135, 3-nights; \$160, 4-nights.

Information: 510-653-3244, festival@ancientways.com or visit www.ancientways.com



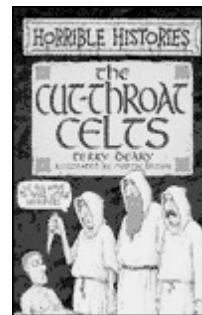
Modesto Pagan Pride Day Harvest Fest

September 11; Modesto, CA

The 2004 Harvest Fest will be held at the American Legion Hall. We plan on offering 20 to 30 craft vendors, covens, and non-profit booths in addition to 4 to 5 authors and speakers. Bands, mythic dancers, entertainment and more will grace our entertainment stage on the deck. We will also be featuring an art show, discussion panels, and a 9/11 memorial. We are planning a second memorial ritual in respect to 9/11. We will also be having a large Memorial Banner that we hope to get 100's of Pagan signatures on before we send it to New York and Washington DC. Cost: Free, with a canned food donation. Details TBA as plans progress.

Information: 209-549-1727,
wprayers@whisperedprayers.com or visit
<http://www.aupagans.com/Modesto/PPD.html>.

Book Reviews



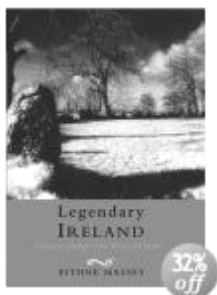
The Cut-Throat Celts

By Terry Deary
Published by Scholastic Ltd. 1997 About \$7.
By Michael, Digitalis Grove

This is a 130 page heavily illustrated little paperback that is chock-full of "incriminating" material about the ancient Celts, delightfully presented in a humorous manner to thrill and shock the young teenager, but still readable enough for an adult. Dr. Terry Deary has written about 16 of these books in the "Horrible Histories" series, to encourage younger British readers to find the "juicy, insane, raw and bleeding" aspects of what is often a rather dry subject. Other enticing titles are "Rotten Romans", "Smashing Saxons", "Bloody Scotland" and simply "Ireland". He apparently has a big fan club, rare for a historian, a group he often execrates with typical British slang. He has apparently widely consulted and combed through the existing archeological and historical texts on the ancient Celts (covering mostly

700BCE-700CE, especially on Gaul), with often a surprising knack for remembering the stranger aspects and stories. The errors are surprisingly few for someone who is not an acknowledged Celtic specialist, although he glaringly confused Ogham and Nordic runes in one chapter. Naturally, there is much on the religious aspects of the Druids, and he is not mean spirited, but the sacrifice jokes do get a bit old after the first few chapters, and rarely goes beyond solid historical details of Celtic spirituality. However, even if you think you've read it all, read this and get a few chuckles about it; and leave it where your child can run across it. See Amazon for the author, or go to www.terry-deary.com for a full list of his titles.

A Druid Missal-Any
P.O. Box 406
Canyon, CA 94516
Please note the new mailing address!
E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net



Legendary Ireland:

A Journey Through the Celtic
Places and Myths by Eithne Massey
(Hardback; 25.00 Euro / 30.00 USD / 19.00 UK; 240 pages.)
From the Read Ireland Book News

This book is a vivid and original journey through the Celtic places and myths of ancient Ireland. Woven into the Irish landscape are tales of love and betrayal, greed and courage, passion and revenge, featuring the famous personalities of Celtic lore, such as CuChulainn and Queen Maeve, Diarmuid and Grainne, the Children of Lir, Oisín and Fionn. The book also reveals some of the less well-known but equally captivating stories, including 'The Hag of Beara', and 'Li Ban, the Mermaid of Lough Neagh'. The author has re-visited all twenty-eight sites and explores their history, archaeology and folklore. All of these magical and mythical places open windows to a heroic yet very human world. Illustrated with atmospheric photographs and elegant engravings, full colour throughout.

Read Ireland
342 North Circular Road
Dublin 7, Ireland.
Telephone and facsimile number: +353-1-830-2997.
<http://www.readireland.com>

Calendar

Beltane, the beginning of the Season of Life, as 15 degrees of Taurus, will occur on May 4, 2004 at 21:04 PDT or conversely as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl. May 4 at 17:56 PDT. Poison Oak Grove's social observance of Beltaine has not been decided yet.

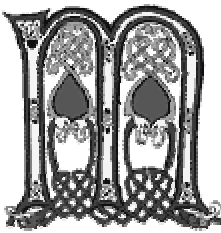
A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

A Druid Missal-Any Summer Solstice Year XLII Vol. 20 Number 4 June 19th, 2004 c.e.



Summer Solstice Essay: Danu and Stonehenge

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Summer Solstice 1987
By Emmon Bodfish



Midsummer Solstice, one of the four minor High Days of the Reformed Druid Calendar, is associated with the Celtic Goddess Danu, Mother of the Gods, the Tuath de Danann. She is particularly associated with rivers, and rivers from the Don in Russia to the Don in Scotland are thought to be named for Her. She is probably the same figure as the Irish Goddess, Anu, and the Bretons' Ana. Roman Diana and Greek Artemis may be other cognates of this Pan-Indo-European deity. These theories are based on the study of word origins, and on the witness of Gallo-Roman writers of the period who noted the similarities in character, rituals, and Seasons of Worship between Danu and Diana. These primary historical sources, written when the Celtic religion was still practiced in Gaul, corroborate the evidence from linguistic studies. There is opinion about that Danu was not an important Deity, or even that the Celts lacked a Mother-Goddess figure, but I can find no hard evidence in Philology, history, or Celtic Mythology for this point of view.

Like Roman Diana, Danu's totem is the boar, an animal also associated with a female agricultural deity in the Balkans. Danu, like Frigga of the Germans, presides over marriage and fertility. The luckiness of June weddings may be a distant memory of Her festivities. Mugwort is Her flower, an herb also sacred to Roman Diana; the ripe ear of grain is Her token. (This fits T. Edwards' theory that the Christian Madonna was modeled after (to co-opt?) the various Mother-Grain Goddesses of pagan Europe.) On the Isle of Man it is customary to wear a sprig of mugwort to the Midsummer dance, and in England, placing mugwort under her pillow is said to bring a young woman dreams of their future husband. In Scotland, there are all night bonfires, song fests, and dances for the young, unmarried people of the villages.

This is the morning on which the Sun used to rise over the heel stone at Stonehenge, thus beginning the new season in the Megalithic calendar. It no longer rises at that point owing to the

procession of the Earth's axis, but celebrations are held there, anyway.



The Druids did NOT build Stonehenge. It antedates their arrival in Britain by centuries. It was William Stuckeley in 1717 who mislocated the Druids there. He did some of the best archeological fieldwork of his day, but his theorizing later wildly outstripped his data. The mistake was an honest one, however, considering what was known in his time. He showed that the stones were not a memorial to King Arthur nor a Roman temple, the two then common theories. He was the first to establish the monument as definitely pre-Roman. The only knowledge of pre-Roman Britain he had came from Roman and Greek writers of the Classical Period. They said that Britain was inhabited by Celts whose priests were the Druids. So, if the stones were older than any Roman constructions, Stuckeley reasoned, they must have been put there by Druids. He knew of no other candidates. But in the last two centuries, archeology has provided us with many, even too many other possibilities. The currently favored candidates are the early Neolithic farmers of Natufian stock, a longheaded, slender, fine-boned people who inhabited the Salisbury area from 2900-2500 B.C. coinciding with the most accurate modern date for the first cycle of building at Stonehenge. A larger boned hardier people later took over the monument and set up the Blue Stones, but they too had disappeared before the arrival of the Celts around 480 B.C.

This is not to say that the Celts did not take cognizance of the huge stones. They worked monuments of other prehistoric peoples into their mythology and song. Numerous Bardic compositions refer to the Sidh Mounds of Ireland and the Carnes of Scotland as sacred places and the long abandoned abodes of the Gods. They may have done the same for Stonehenge, but the English traditions and Bardic works were almost all lost, while the Irish are among the best preserved of any oral lore.

"Behold the Sidhe before your eyes. It is manifest to you that it is a king's mansion, which was built by the firm Dagda. It is a wonder, a court, and admirable hill."

"The Sidhe of Donegal," a seminar by Prof. Duran.

Two or more different groups of peoples, sharing the same or similar astronomically oriented beliefs, contributed to the five cycles of construction and reconstruction at Stonehenge. Theirs was a fairly sophisticated culture for the time. They knew that the Solstices, eclipses of the Moon, and the courses of the stars were regular predictable events. Their stone moving techniques were on a par with the times. Though not aligned accurately enough for an "observatory" in the modern sense, the stones can serve as a calendar rectifier, an eclipse predictor, and, of course, as a ritual site for religious ceremonies. But what those religions were must remain a matter of conjecture. Clearly they had something to do with sunrise, Midsummer Solstice, moonrise, and lunar eclipses, but what they meant, and what the people did

there, is probably not recoverable. As Clannad sings "Forgotten is the race that no one knows." 2

1 A friend of mine tried the experiment of putting mugwort under her pillow, but reported she had no dreams at all. "I guess I'm just going to stay single." She is till fancy-free three years later. If anyone wants to try this, you can get mugwort in most herb shops. Send in your results and we'll publish them for Lughnasadh.

2 Clannad, a modern Irish Folk Group. "Ring of Stones," good album.



News of the Groves

Sylvagaia/Elder Grove: News from France

Sylvagaia/Elder Grove is happy to present itself to the Druidic world. Although this grove consists mainly of trees, shrubs, lichens, woodland animals and myriad other life forms, we are represented by a spokesperson of the sapient persuasion. Who greets fellow sisters and brothers with joy. We strongly believe that nature is good, very good even (since we like to look after ourselves). We seek awareness in many of the things we do - even in some of the things we don't do. Our number is indefinite, since life forms come and go. A small family of humans have the honor to look after us in our divers encounters with the human race. Let's see how they will do.

The humans garden a lot and enjoy the freedom of not buying food to others. They think it makes them more self sufficient and independent. Furthermore they believe that various degrees of self sufficiency, coupled with a simple, frugal lifestyle will do good to the planet, the Earth-Mother, and consider this a holy act. Perhaps a personal and spiritual duty.

To contact us: cerne@club-internet.fr
(Green Willem; Homo Sapiens Sapiens spokes-being for Sylvagaia/Elder Grove, France).

To not contact us:/I\

Peace, in the Earth Mother,

Greenwillem

Creeks Called Rivers Grove: News from West Virginia

Hey, it's Darren from Creeks Called Rivers.

Time comes and time goes, and in time two of us have moved from Columbus and back to West Virginia. This doesn't mean that Creeks Called Rivers Grove is dead; it just means that without the 2 of us, it's much less likely to be particularly active. If you still want to keep CCR listed on the page, go ahead and direct email to this account.

Now, as for the future...we're pressing on as Little Mountains Grove (with the fine tradition of my fig tree as Archdruid). For the record, we are just outside of Parkersburg, WV, nestled among the oak and ash.

And, um, sorry for the lapse in communication.

From the bounty of the Earth Mother,

—Darren

Eurisko Grove: News from Virginia

I would like to announce the return of Eurisko Grove, an RDNA protogrove. In conjunction with PaganNet, we conducted a Beltaine ritual in Hampton Va. for approximately 30 people. For midsummer, members of our group will be celebrating with Earthrising, a CUUPs chapter in Newport News Va., & conducting a private ritual at Natural chimneys park in Mt. Solon Va. based on reading from Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Swamp Grove: News from Florida

Please add my new e-mail: spacerock@comcast.net and note that our little group is now located in Ft. Myers rather than Naples. We moved about a half hour north but we still have some of the old gang and some new folks as well. Saint Herbert (One of our longtime members) is helping me to make a new website, so I will let you know as soon as it is up. The move was hectic and many adventures occurred since our last contact, but the damn grove just won't die. I guess it is meant to be.

Summer comes quickly to the swamp Grove, filling us with more lethargy than usual. Our rainy season has started and it will rain for about 30-45 minutes each day until late September or early October. The summer Solstice is upon us and we shall celebrate another year with food and drink and the playing and smoking of the pipes. We look forward to winter the same way our northern brothers and sisters long for the summer, everything about our grove seems to be backwards but that's just the way we are. Our fruit trees are doing well enough to produce most of the year round; Figs, Oranges, Lemons, Bananas, Miracle Fruit, Surinam Cherries, Avocados, Papayas and Grapefruit. This year's garden was not the best, as we planted it too late and the sun gets too hot for veggies early here.

Dravidia Grove: News from Indiana

All is well here, had a lot of Tornado Warnings this past month, and not much time between work and them to scout a new location for the ceremonies. Settling in nicely though...Did some research at the library on Mistletoe growth in Southern Indiana, and it is all over the place here, just have to find a few patches and get a good out of the way location setup... Still have to finish the unpacking of my Altar and Books, and have not a lot of time to do it with work. Have to work a few more hours than normal to make ends meet here... Well that about ends it here.

Yours in the Mother.

Cat-in-the-Corner Grove: News from Colorado

Cat-in-the-Corner Grove is still here, albeit in a rather inward-focused state at present (not hibernation, more like introspection). Nothing wrong with that, Nature has cycles of rest & activity too.

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

As I sit upon this mossy rock
underneath the trees
I smell the earth and summer scent

...listen to the rustle of the leaves.
 I leave an offering to the one
 and have a drink of water.
 I quietly listen to the passing deer
 and birds chasing one another.
 the sun shines through the gaps in the trees
 as though a miracle has occurred
 ...and so it has.
 deep breath.
 a wonderful midsummer to all!
 Don't leap too close the fire.

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

This Summer Solstice is the last High Day we will have the little cabin on Emmon's land. The new tenant of the main house decided he wanted it as a playroom for his kids, and being good friends with the director of the Muir Heritage Land Trust, guess who lost out. It is with tremendous sadness that I will be vacating the cabin by the end of July. Yes, I will have my own pity party. I've been the only friend of Emmon's who has been involved with the maintenance of the property, organized the creation of the memorial boulder, attended any of the town council meetings, or meeting the neighborhood associations to set up the land as open space. Not even a family member has taken part. I've been a good tenant and even paid for repairs out of my own pocket. It's like it hasn't even mattered. It just seems wrong. My greatest fear is that this is a pissing contest and we will no longer be able to use and enjoy the grove site, but have been assured this is not the case and I still have the support of the community. All things are ephemeral. We will learn to adapt. We have been incredibly lucky to have been able to use the cabin at all. For this we will always be grateful.



Witness the Summer Solstice at the UMass Sunwheel

Sunrise 5:00 a.m. & Sunset 7:30 p.m.
 Sunday & Monday
 June 20 & 21, 2004

Members of the University community and the general public are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Dr. Judith Young of the U.Mass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the UMass Sunwheel for the upcoming SUMMER SOLSTICE. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 5:00 a.m., and

visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 7:30 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both Sunday & Monday, June 20 and 21, 2004. The sky will be particularly beautiful at sunset both evenings with the waxing crescent Moon toward the west.

For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation, which will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, insect repellent, and be prepared for cool temperatures when the Sun is down. Visitors are also welcome to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on. A \$3 donation is requested to help with the cost of stone pathworks and exhibit expansion, which are planned for the Sunwheel. Sunwheel T-shirts & sweatshirts will be available for purchase.

At the time of the summer solstice, when the days are longest and the nights are shortest, the Sun rises and sets at its most northerly location, over the tallest stones in the Sunwheel. The word 'solstice' means standstill, and refers to the fact that at solstice, the Sun appears to rise and set in the same direction for over a week. Even though the instant when the Sun is most northerly is on June 20 @ 8:57 p.m., visitors will be able to see the Sun rising and setting over the summer solstice stones from about June 17-26. The astronomical cause of the Sun's standstill is one of the topics, which will be explained during the Sunwheel gathering.

The UMass Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road and across from the maze. The Sunwheel can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west, on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. In the event of rain, the events will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own.

For more information on the UMass Sunwheel, check out the web site at <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel>

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 University of Massachusetts
 Amherst, MA 01003
 413-545-4311 (voice)
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Just How Far Have We Come?

Thoughts on the Berkeley Interfaith
 Pagan Pride Parade

On Saturday May 15th pagans of all colors and stripes turned out for the Third Annual (and Final) Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade in Berkeley. This year's theme was "Divine Feminine: Celebrating the Spirit of the Earth Mother." Among

the variety of groups participating were NROOGD, Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, ADF, OBOD, Tambores do Brasil, Temple of the Hebrew Goddess, and it was the biggest, most colorful, and best attended parade in its three-year history. Diana Paxon, noted science fiction author was this year's parade marshal.

The very local paper, the Berkeley Daily Planet covered the event that was followed by celebrations in Civic Center Park, with speakers, ritual, blessings, and music. Rather than covering the event in a fair and informative manner this paper publishes a scathing, mocking article, taking us back 20 years to the era of misunderstanding and prejudice of the pagan community.

It made me spitting mad! Berkeley, that so-called bastion of liberalness, treats and considers pagans this way? The same town that banned American flags on fire trucks after 9/11? One of the centers of the anti-war and civil rights movements? It makes me realize the town is only open-minded and alternative when it suits it, like a permanently rebellious teenager.

There was a tremendous outpouring of anger and resentment by the pagan community in the form of well-written letters to the paper. And the Berkeley Daily Planet downplayed the biased article and wrote off the negative comments by saying the article was "only poking fun." What if it did that towards blacks or Christianity or Judaism or pot smoking? You betcha it never would. How convenient.

By the way, the organizers had decided to resign before the article because of all the bureaucracy they had to go to. The parade was relegated to a single lane on Shattuck Ave (a four-lane busy street in downtown Berkeley). No one could really see it unless they were on the sidewalk next to the lane the parade was in. It was very insulting and I wanted to cry.

They wanted the endorsement of the Sierra Club but had to change the name to do it. That's why it's no longer the Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade any more. How sad. How very sad. Stay tuned for next year's "Earth Heart Parade and Festival." Back in the closet again? At least we will be able to show our faces in public and not risk being burned at the stake.

Included below are the original article, readers' responses, and the response of the Daily Planet.



Pagans on Parade Cavort in Downtown Berkeley

By RICHARD BRENNEMAN, Berkeley Daily Planet, 05-18-04

Bay Area tree-worshippers, Goddess-worshippers, gay and straight wiccans, Shinto devotees and their kindred—many of them clad in lavish costumes—gathered in Berkeley Saturday for the always colorful Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration.

The day began with a parade through downtown city streets—where most of the spectators seemed to be equipped with digital cameras—before winding up in Civic Center Park.

The city managed to keep traffic flowing in both directions along Shattuck Avenue as the parade passed by, with parking enforcement and police officers, aided by barricades and cones, confining celebrants to one southbound lane.

Drivers hoping to use Milvia Street along the length of the Berkeley High School campus were less fortunate, finding traffic blocked in both directions. Allston Way adjacent to Civic Center Park was also closed, and traffic on several downtown side streets was restricted to a single lane.

Though paganism was nowhere defined in event literature, a visitor to the affair could have walked away from the festivities with the notion many adherents were polytheist peddlers.

The grassy area of Civic Center Park was encircled by a ring of booths offering crystals, dolls, drinking horns, clothing, jewelry, idols, drawings, prints, ointments, oils, incense, and palm and card readings.

One clothing seller was decidedly perturbed to see a reporter's camera aimed at his ware. "What're you doing?" he asked. "Tryin' to conduct an inventory?"

The Internal Revenue Service, it seems, has taken to wandering various shows and taking before-and-after merchandise photos in search of vendors underreporting their sales.

One notable exception to the commercialism was a group of five neatly groomed young adults standing next to a plastic barrel propping up a FREE WATER sign. Asking all comers, "free water?," they dispensed their refreshing libations with a smile and no further comment.

A curious reporter, pleased to have quenched his thirst after an hour shooting pictures under the bright, warm sun, asked one of the quintet, "Who are you, and why are you doing this?"

"Oh, it's Michael's birthday, and he thought it would be nice to come down here today and pass out water," one of them answered.

Michael turned out to be Michael Duenes, a distinctly non-pagan teacher at Redwood Christian High School in San Lorenzo, and a little more coaxing revealed his story.

"When we came down here, I didn't even know that there'd be a pagan festival today, but I figured there'd be a lot of a thirsty people. We don't mention who we are, because God's love is free," Duenes explained.

He said he opted to pass out the bottled water on his birthday as a symbol of the living water of Christ.

Duenes and his fellow water dispensers are members of The Berkeley Mosaic—"We think of ourselves as broken people united by Christ"—a congregation led by Pastor Dennis Tuma.

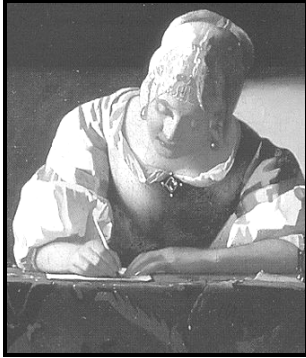
"I'm glad to see the Daily Planet here," Duenes said. "I got one of your t-shirts at the Solano Stroll, and I wear it to school sometimes on Fridays. The students seem surprised I'm from Berkeley, but I tell them I love it here."

The other dispensers of free things—recruiters for the Covenant of the Goddess and the Temple of the Hebrew Goddess and promoters of gay marriage, immigration rights for same-sex partners, and legalized prostitution (itself a fine old pagan tradition)—were restricted to the elevated plaza around the defunct fountain, an area that attracted few visitors.

The paganisms on offer were distinctly New Age version of ancient traditions. No animals (or humans) were offered up as sacrifices, and the closest thing to ritual scarification on view were tattoos.

There were no temple prostitutes and no orgies, though several costumed males wore the horns of satyrs and the ever-randy Pan, and the only bared female breasts appeared on modern-day replicas of ancient Minoan statues.

And the only equivalent of the All-Seeing Eye was the tripod-mounted video camera run by a red-coated gentleman from atop the tower of old city hall building.



Readers Respond to Pagan Parade Coverage

Berkeley Daily Planet (06-01-04)

Editors, Daily Planet:

I appreciated that your paper's coverage of the Berkeley Pagan Parade ("Pagans on Parade Cavort in Downtown Berkeley," Daily Planet, May 18-20). However I felt that focusing at least half of the article on a little Christian group giving out water, and not on the actual Pagans (which, by the way, should be capitalized out of respect, just like Christianity and Hinduism) and what their parade was even about. Turning one of the few times in a year that (minority) Pagans can come into the spotlight into yet another excuse to write about (dominant) Christians is very unfortunate. Not only that, but the article not-so-subtly compares the gentle Christian act of giving water to hypothetical Pagan orgies and animal sacrifice; this is downright insulting innuendo, and utterly unprofessional in the extreme.

Also, why must Pagans "cavort" when they have a parade? If it were a Catholic parade, would your journalists say they were "cavorting"? Or imply that one should expect to see Jews being tortured (as they were by Catholics centuries ago)? Of course not! And why? Because such innuendoes would be very offensive and insulting to Catholics. Yet your paper seems to think it's perfectly fine to say and imply similar things to Pagans.

Please show our religion the same respect you show the dominant ones in our country and keep these things in mind when your paper next covers a Pagan activity.

Brett Lowry

Editors, Daily Planet:

I assume Richard Brenneman's article on the Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade and Celebration was an attempt to narrate a visitor's experiences of the festival. However, Mr. Brenneman did resort to gratuitous negatives and common biases in order to define the event. I quote "paganism... nowhere defined in event literature," "no animals (or humans) were offered up as sacrifices," and "no temple prostitutes and no orgies" and "only equivalent of the "All-Seeing Eye was the tripod-mounted video camera... atop the tower of old city hall," and "promoters

of ...legalized prostitution (itself a fine old pagan tradition) were restricted to...the elevated plaza..."

My impression of the event was entirely different. I read the program guide and found a wealth of information. I saw a wholesome celebration of interfaith groups, good selection of arts and crafts, plus marvelous music performances. The "all-seeing eye" happened to be Berkeley Community Media, Berkeley's own cable TV station, which filmed the festival from various locations including the old city hall tower. Also, proponents of the Berkeley ballot measure on prostitution were not part of the approved pagan pride event, though I did see one unauthorized petition gatherer walking from the adjacent Farmer's Market into the festival.

There is already too much divisiveness in the world to add "paganism in Berkeley" to the roster. I hope the Berkeley Daily Planet will do a follow-up story, an interview with an event representative, or a retraction regarding the above article. A follow-up would be an ideal opportunity for Berkeley's premier voice to dispel prejudice and inform the public about modern neo-paganism.

Gianna Ranuzzi

Editors, Daily Planet:

My father, Phillip Potter of the Baltimore Sun, brought me up to respect the profession of journalism, and used to revile "yellow sheet journalism" as an insidious betrayal of the public trust. Your recent article, "Pagans on Parade Cavort in Downtown Berkeley," is a fine example of the worst sort of journalism. I was there for the entire day, and note that almost every word of Richard Brenneman's article was spurious, inciteful, and devoid of truth. In this day and age of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, hate mongering and violence, the last thing we need is journalistic religious intolerance. You owe the organizers of the event, the participants, and the community an apology.

Shame on you.

Susan Potter

Editors, Daily Planet:

As a dedicated reader of the Daily Planet I'm ashamed, disgusted and most of all insulted by your horrible, poorly researched article about The Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade. As an independent paper you require the support of your community, and you managed to disrespect a large number of us with this article. If you continue to publish this kind of garbage you're going to see your support base start slipping away. I will never read the Daily Planet again; you are a disgrace to Berkeley and all that it stands for. Fundamentalists would be (and I'm sure are) proud!

With regret and disdain,

Caitlyn Powell

Editors, Daily Planet:

I am personally offended by the article by Richard Brenneman on Pagan Pride Day in Berkeley. I am a Pagan myself and attended the event. I found it peaceful and a celebration of religions that are fairly new and religions that predate Christianity and not the prostitution peddling festival of tax evasion evil that Mr. Brenneman made it out to be. The way the article was written reveals his ignorance and bigotry of the pagan community.

I was really offended by his contrasting of the Christians who dispense free water (which was much appreciated) and the vendors at the event. He made no mistake portraying the scene like the pagans are a bunch of tax evading, religion peddling misfits and the water dispensing Christians as an island of righteousness in a sea of sinfulness.

I will not put up with this and will be distributing the article among other pagans as far as I can reach. I will be encouraging them to not read the Berkeley Daily Planet and it's affiliates until a full-page apology is made.

I have to congratulate Mr. Brenneman and the Berkeley Daily Planet on offending an entire religious community that practices nothing but love of each other, the earth and love of peace with his venom. If that's what was intended, it has been done.

Stephanie Jones

Editors, Daily Planet:

Regarding your article on the Pagan Parade: What a poor excuse for journalism. And, to assign blame where blame is due, what a lazy, irresponsible editorial choice to allow this story to run as written. Certainly the cynical, world-weary, sarcastically tongue-in-cheek approach to writing has its place, and one has to look no further than the East Bay Express and the Bay Guardian to find countless examples of this style, in which informative content is wholly subsumed by attitude. Until now, I've viewed the Daily Planet as a publication with a sincere interest in serving the Berkeley community. Mr. Brenneman's approach to his reportage of the parade, however, reveals a complete lack of interest in his subject matter, as well as an arbitrary, mean-spirited willingness to cast the volunteer efforts of a large group of community-minded participants in a negative light.

As someone who has regularly volunteered my own time as a professional musician to help with fundraising events for the Parade, it pisses me off no end to see the efforts of a talented, hard-working community of people dismissed out of hand as nothing more than selfish, immoral, parasitic indulgence. I pity the journalist who refuses to do even the minimum of research on his subject in order to free his sarcastic "wit" to function unencumbered by the facts. Brenneman is no Steve Rubenstein or Dave Barry, but if that's the type of writing he aspires to, maybe you should give him a column; that way, your readers won't mistake him for an actual reporter.

Mark Ungar
San Francisco

Editors, Daily Planet:

I found your article "Pagans on Parade" by Richard Brenneman to be really lame and disrespectful. Why does he delight in criticizing the hard work and positive energy of others? Here we have a group of people singing, dancing, drumming, and adding beauty to Berkeley, and the only good

thing he has to say is about someone who wasn't part of the event (the Christian dispensing water). As a pagan, and a druid, I found his denigration of the celebration of my faith to be completely inappropriate. Does he walk by Bar Mitzvahs and find things to mock about the celebrants? Get a clue, dude!

Here's hoping he sleeps well at night with the comforting thought that 1,500 witches are pissed off at him.

Sweet dreams!

Kira Westfall

Editors, Daily Planet:

I was shocked that a city with the reputation for fairness that Berkeley used to enjoy would cover an event as all-inclusive and supportive of minorities as the Pagan Pride Parade with such poor journalism and unfairness.

A large portion of the feature was devoted to how Christians were dispensing "the living water" of Christ, while nowhere did the Planet's intrepid reporter get to the heart of what paganism is all about.

An article of this nature might have been appropriate on the op-ed page, or better yet in a Christian newspaper. The Planet is apparently turning Moonie.

John Koenig
Former Berkeley resident

Editors, Daily Planet:

I was extremely disappointed by the May 18 article by Richard Brenneman entitled "Pagans on Parade Cavort in Downtown Berkeley." I have never attended the parade. I heard about the event on KPFA and in the SF Bay Guardian. I support events that attempt to build bridges between spiritual communities, particularly in these extremely troubled times. I was hoping to read a comprehensive article in your paper describing the events of the day. Instead I found an article that was heavily biased and extremely disrespectful in tone.

Except for his section on the Christian group, Mr. Brenneman repeatedly utilized gross stereotype to frame his so-called report. I was touched and enjoyed the reporter's description of the Christian group offering water. Curiously there were no other attempts to personalize other less mainstream participants at the parade. I can only assume that Mr. Brenneman was unable to maintain the objectivity required of a reporter when he went on this assignment. I am puzzled that his editors were unable to recognize the manifest problems with this story. I hope that in the future the Daily Planet will be more careful about whom they assign to write and edit such stories. Please let me know how the Daily Planet intends to proceed in this matter. Thank you.

Megan Evart
Concord

Editors, Daily Planet:

Becky O'Malley's editorial, "Seeing Ourselves as Others See Us" in the May 25 edition, cuts to the crux of the matter. The point of Richard Brenneman's piece "Pagan's Parade..." in fact was to "poke gentle fun" at those with whom your paper does not purportedly agree on a religious basis. But his piece -

however innocently intended - had missed its mark, as did her support for it.

What makes Garrison Keillor's prodding at Lutherans, Unitarians, Catholics, etc., humorous and effective is that Keillor makes his living as a humorist. Perhaps more importantly, Keillor makes clear his own beliefs in God, and with his one foot on that ground, he allows an audience or a reader see him as a part of his joke, rather than apart from it.

Mark Twain's letters regarding Mormons and Christian evangelicals to the journal *Alta California* were simply that: letters.

While objectivity is a goal difficult to achieve by any writer, it is the goal of a journalist. Based on previously authored articles, I've been under the impression that Mr. Brenneman is a journalist, and therefore, follows basic journalistic principles. One of which is to offer a fair and balanced report.

Brenneman's Pagan article had other intentions and was inappropriate for the main body of your newspaper. Its placement did nothing short of alienating a harmless group of people at a harmless gathering. The article would have better served the readership as an editorial opinion, a review or column.

For Brenneman to willingly show bias in an inappropriate format is self-indulgent. To then to be supported by a top executive, whose tone is to trivialize the matter, is patronizing, and it leaves the *Berkeley Daily Planet* and its journalists suspect in their endeavors to serve the community as something more than just a self-aggrandizing vehicle for advertisers.

Bob Ferrer

Editors, Daily Planet:

I read an article that greatly disturbed me, and I wanted to bring this to your attention.

There was a gathering in Berkeley, and it was covered and written with such disdain for the Pagan Society, I and my fellow sisterhood and brotherhood of witches and pagans are appalled, that you would allow this inflammatory article to be written. I understand freedom of speech, however this goes far beyond that, and I would only hope you will take a closer look at this article and justify why you would think this article was written fairly and without prejudice.

I am proud to call myself a Witch. I am Pagan, and I for one take extreme exception to your article sir. Who ever wrote this should indeed be careful that they have not set themselves up for slander and libel.

Freedom of Religion, means all religions...

Safyre Witch



Editorial: Seeing Ourselves as Others See Us

Becky O'Malley, Berkeley Daily Planet (05-25-04)

A famous Celtic bard once wrote:

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursel as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!"

In modern English,

"Oh would some Power give us the gift
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would free us from many a blunder
And foolish notion.
What airs in dress and gait would leave us,
And even devotion!"

That's from Robert Burns' poem "To a Louse," in which the poet describes his reaction on seeing a louse crawling on the bonnet of a pretentious and well-dressed churchgoer.

The *Daily Planet* has been deluged with letters from pagans around the world, as far away as South Africa, because our man Richard Brenneman dared to poke a little gentle fun at last week's Interfaith Pagan Pride Parade. Or perhaps we should say from Pagans, since we got at least one letter saying that (contrary to the advice of our dictionaries and style books), the word should be capitalized, as is Christian, because Pagans have a real religion too.

We certainly agree that they have a real religion. Which is precisely why they, like all other religions, are fair game for having fun poked at them by the irreligious. Making fun of religion is a tradition as old as some of the traditions which today's neo-Pagans believe themselves to be reviving. Mark Twain practiced it. While the irate p/Pagans are web-surfing, they should check out, for example, his 1867-1869 letters to the San Francisco journal *Alta California*, in which he makes fun of both Mormons and Christian evangelicals. Today, Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* regularly ridicules Lutherans, Catholics, and any other representatives of mainstream religions who live in his fictional Lake Wobegon, Minnesota. (He never mentions p/Pagans, so there must not be any in Lake Wobegon.) We reprinted a long angry letter from the p/Pagan parade co-coordinators on the same page with our regular comic strip from Dan O'Neill, who chose on that very day to make fun of Christians, Jews and Muslims all in one strip.

San Francisco's Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of gay guys, make fun of Catholic nuns. As someone who was educated by nuns, and who found them in the main to be women of kindness, intelligence and strong character, I might take offense at the parody. As a feminist, I might complain that the SPIs are secretly resentful of women who are in a position of power. But over the years I've noticed that, while seeming to mock nuns, they're also noted the good works nuns have done, and have imitated them by doing good works in their own community, the sincerest form of flattery.

By the way, Brenneman's description of the Christian group giving out free water at the event was also tongue-in-cheek, but the ironic tone he employed seems to have escaped many of the letter writers. Some of them, of course, admit that they didn't read the piece, but are just responding to an alert broadcast on p/Pagan blogs on the Internet.

A few of the letters we've received from the p/Pagans have threatened to sue the Planet for libel, and one cited the ACLU's sponsorship of their parade as justification for that point of view. I'd check with the ACLU before taking that theory too far. If one wanted to get into a deep First Amendment analysis of the p/Pagan event, questions might be raised about whether or not fees paid to the city of Berkeley were 100 percent compensation for the cost to the city of policing and cleaning up, and if not, why not? Would the same courtesies have been extended to, for example, Lutherans on the Loose, as to p/Pagans on Parade? Under the U.S. Constitution, governments are not supposed to do special favors for any particular religion.

And who's going to compensate the farmer's market vendors for lost business? One farmer told me that one might expect that events in Martin Luther King Civic Center Park would be good for business, but in fact the reverse is true: Big gatherings with blocked-off streets and amplified sound drive away food shoppers.

In our book, people are welcome to hold any religious beliefs that they choose, but that doesn't give them a free pass from criticism, whether it's in the form of ridicule or as serious disagreement. Religious belief has always been used as justification for outrageous and intolerable actions, and that includes some of the beliefs and practices espoused by today's new Pagans. Many people believe that the world would be a better place without religion, and a cursory look at today's activities in the region which spawned the three desert monotheistic religions suggests that they might be right.

Becky O'Malley



Prayer for Sleep

By Robin Goodfellow
Modified for the RDNA with permission.

Earth Mother, rock me in your arms; Be'al, guard my rest from fear, regret, doubt and anxiety. Refresh me in soul, mind and body. Bestow this blessing; I offer my prayer. Sustain me in that perfect peace and awareness promised us who have you in our minds and hearts.

~~~~~

Let me never forget You. Let me feel your warm embrace that comforts me in my troubles, that reminds me that all is not as fearsome as it seems at times, and that I am never alone and without You. Your loving presence gives my heart the reassurance and my mind the courage to carry on peacefully this night and in the days to follow after and after again. In your presence am I safely held secure.

~~~~~

Through the divine connection we share, You and I, this is so, and I am at peace.

Peace, Peace, Peace!

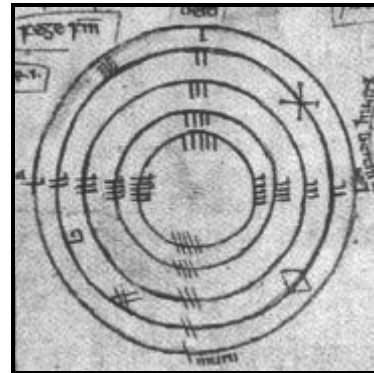
Events

July 10 - Celtic Pagan Study Group - Redwood City Imbas, a Celtic Restorationist organization, invites you to a Celtic Pagan Study Group at the Redwood City Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (back lounge), 2124 Brewster Avenue, at 1:00pm. The group plans to meet monthly. Please, no small children or food. Cost: \$5; nobody turned away for lack of funds. Information: brenda at twoburrens.com

GODDESS SCREENINGS: "Signs Out of Time: the story of Marija Gimbutas" by Donna Read & Starhawk and "Mother Earth: Revisioning the Sacred" by Mary R. Hopkins. July 10, 2004 7:00 pm. \$10 - \$20 sliding scale. All genders are welcome!

AT: Change Makers Books and Gifts for Women 6536 Telegraph Ave and 66th Street. PH. 510-655-2405. 4 blocks south of Ashby near Ashby Bart station. Open 11-7, closed Tuesdays. www.ChangeMakersForWomen.com

Book Reviews



The Druids' Alphabet

By Robert Lee (Skip) Ellison
Earth Religions Press, 2002, \$17.95 US, ISBN 1-59405503-3
Review by Daven

One would think that a book on the Ogham by the current Arch Druid of the Ar nDraiocht Fein would be a book a cut above many others, and that thinking would be correct in this work.

I got this book to continue my studies in the Ogham and I was expecting something very different from what I got. I was expecting a work on the divination of the Ogham, but instead I got almost a masterwork on the Ogham Alphabet itself. Contained in this work are examples of the 120 different Ogham sets that the Druids used, with graphic examples taken from the various museums that still have them in their collection, and much other lore on the Ogham. There is information on the Bird Ogham, the River Pool Ogham, and all of it points to the Ogham associations that we have now being a way to remember the letters, much like today's alphabet of A is for Apple, B is for.

The section on the different types of Ogham script and the different associations that the letters have makes this work invaluable in and of itself. But there is some more.

Skip's first few chapters give common meanings for the Ogham, and explain why extra letters have been added to some of the current sets of letters. Later chapters gives a brief discussion of divination and what it is (although there are no associations and meanings of the Ogham letters included), a brief history of the ADF and a brief warning about Robert

Graves and his work "The White Goddess". I feel the latter is necessary as the Celtic Tree Calendar many use now is completely made up out of whole cloth, and the author points this out directly.

After that are multiple translations from multiple sources for the Battle of the Trees. Then there is a correspondence chart that has very brief divinatory meanings along with instructions of how to make "Ogham disks" for use in divination.

The author states in his introduction that this work is a culmination of the texts he has written for the ADF on the Ogham, published for the first time and available to the public. That's how this text reads like. Understanding that is essential, as there seem to be some holes in the material. Logical trains of thought stop and (for example) the things that one would expect to be present are not. I can only assume that this is due to those sections of the material considered secret and for the ADF only. Which is fair enough since there is material in every tradition that is secret.

I'm giving this book 4 1/2 stars of 5. I feel that for a serious student of the Ogham this is a necessary reference work, a companion to all the other works on the Ogham there are. It will fill in many holes in the information, and it is written in an easy to understand style that makes it a gentle read while not detracting from the weight of the work itself at all.

Daven

Calendar

Summer Solstice, when the Sun enters Cancer and reaches its highest point, the zenith, in the sky, will take place on Sunday, June 20th at 5:57 p.m. PST.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

A Druid Missal-Any

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Lughnasadh Essay: Summer Games

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Lughnasadh 1988
By Emmon Bodfish



Originally a celebration of the funeral games held by Lugh, Celtic god of light for his father the Sun, Lughnasadh marks the Sun's position half way between Solstice and Equinox. By now, usually August sixth or seventh, the day's length is noticeably shortened. The sun, re-born on December 22, is in decline, and the season of the harvest, Foghamhar, is coming. This High Day marked the beginning of the harvest in pre-industrial times, and in Druidic times was known as the Festival of the First Fruits. Cutting of the new grain could begin, and "hungry July" was over. In the Celtic countries, this middle-of-the-summer festival is still marked by The Races in Ireland, the Revels in Wales, and the highland Games in Scotland. In a livestock-raising culture like that of the Iron Age Celts, this was the most likely time of market faires and regional gatherings. The calves of the spring were old enough to sell or trade. Likewise the sheep would have been sheared and the lambs were old enough to be bartered. This was a festival of the Tuatha, the largest class in the Celtic society, comprised of the farmers, craftsmen and merchants. The other two classes were the Warriors and the Clergy, which last included Bards, Ovates, Filidhs and Druids, their students and retainers.

In the Neo-Pagan R.D.N.A. tradition, anyone who has a garden or grows anything, should save the first picked produce of the summer season and bring it, or a portion of it to the Lughnasadh celebration to be offered along with the Grove Sacrifice and hopes and prayers of prosperity to come.



News of the Groves

Sylvagaia/Elder Grove: News from France

Computer's broken and in repairs for an eternity now. Furthermore we're doing the haying, the wood, stable for the goats... etc. Too much to do, no time, no internet access (I am writing from a library now).
Greetings and until later,

Willem

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

I've been busy. Went to MN for my annual pilgrimage and to unwind in the forest, streams and lakes with my dog & partner. I also met with Brother Shane here in D.C. and we're thinking about reviving services this fall and introducing him to the many Druids around the mystic district. This Lughnasadh, I brought Sister Colleen Peterson of distant Alaska into the first three orders of the RDNA, my first ordination in 16 months. Any one visiting DC is welcome to write to me about ways to overcome distance problems and ordination at mikerdna@hotmail.com

Brother Stephan in Carleton (MN) graduated and has been working on updating a database of "Druid-related" books at Carleton's library that complement the Druid Archival materials. With the list, I intend to purchase and donate new books that are needed for future scholars. As for ARDA 2, Stacey and I will redouble our efforts, after her relocation is complete, to get out Volume 3: Druidic Newsletters this year.

Yours in the Mother,

Mike the fool

New Grove

Catnip Grove: News from Maryland

We are located in Baltimore, MD. There are about 15 of us (cats and humans). New members must be personally invited by the Arch Druid (me), and can only be admitted with their cats. Cats are not required to attend rituals. Catnip Grove can be contacted by emailing the publisher of A Druid Missal-Any, see address at end of newsletter.

Eurisko Grove: News from Virginia

Jaquie's herb harvesting is coming along quite nicely. We have also already started to receive the gifts of the first harvest. A neighbor of ours who has an extensive vegetable garden has already shared with us, tomatoes, cucumbers & okra. Gwydion is working in cooperation with his men's group, Exploring the Primordial Male to host an afternoon of men's drumming on July 2. EPM is also working with PagaNet Inc. to conduct a Public ritual entitled "Putting the Lugh back into Lughnasadh". The previous working title was "The Passion of the Lugh, Our God can die horribly too"

Rowan-Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

Rowan-Oak Grove has gone into a holding pattern until after an issue requiring a tribunal is settled. We will be celebrating lughnasadh but all classes have been suspended until the samhain convocation when among other things we will

vote on whether to continue as a grove or at least temporarily disband all together.

the arch-druidess is frankly tired of all the bs associated with this tribunal issue and so are the rest of the remaining members. the three other groves in the rowan-oak family have had troubles of their own recently. so the convocation will concern all these issues and will include a voting from all three other arch-druid(ess)s for their groves on the situations troubling us.

we hope that all is well for the groves around the world and for all single trees as well as we approach Lughnasadh

m.s. white raven, arch-druidess
rowan-oak grove tag for mocc

Dravidia Grove: News from Indiana

All is well here, had quite a few storms of late and the weather is extremely hot when it isn't raining. Have been studying nature again, have opted to study birds, and rabbits. It is amazing what you can learn just by watching these marvels of nature. There are so many things to learn and the Mother sheds her secrets so easily... Also have come across some new books and have taken the time to get another 3rd of my editing done on my Magick Text... Almost there for those of you who are patiently waiting... Have also begun writing a new book that I will title "The Theories of Mother & Magick" It will contain a variety of thoughts and new theories that I have been working on in the area of magick and different abilities inherent to mankind... Should make for very good reading when it is finished... Well all too much thinking tonight...

Yours in the Mother.

Rogue River Protogrove: News from Oregon

Several of us just returned from the Oregon Country Fair (www.oregoncountryfair.org). A wild, goofy, silly time was had by all. We can arrange carpooling to help save resources so we can, hopefully, attend more events around the area in the future.

Don't forget our Fall Equinox annual camping weekend at a reserved campgrounds in the Rogue River National Forest (Oregon, USA) on September 3, 4, 5. Activities include swimming, fly fishing (beginners welcome and equipment will be provided), workshop by John Michael Greer (topic TBA), Ceilidh (music party/bardic circle) and two Druid rituals. It's FREE but donation appreciated.

Don't let the lack of camping equipment keep you from joining us because we've had two tents and lots of other outdoor equipment donated.

For more information, please email aigeann@earthlink.net

Central Valley Oak Protogrove: News from California

In our neck of the woods, August is the time for County Fairs and the State Fair. These are places the farmers display their crops and livestock for sale and auction. This is also the time local corn, berries, and melons make their appearances. We at the Central Valley Oak Protogrove are doing a special campout in the mountains to celebrate Lughnasadh and the Blue Moon We are going to spend 3 days relaxing under the stars with a campfire, stories, and, of course, Ritual.

Sean mac Dhomhnuill
Central Valley Oak Protogrove

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Hello from Sunset Proto-Grove:

So that, big wheel keeps on turnin'; big sun keeps on burnin'!

My first attempt at veggies, are proving fruitful. Giving me gumption enough to plan an entire garden for next spring's plantings. (I have counted 40 cherry tomatoes growing on my 3 plants...although only 3 are ripe at this time, I have been pouring over my sunset garden guide.)

Saturdays before heading out to the grove-site, (a very shady grove-site) I have been taking the time, to sit out on our sunny patio absorb some sun, and listen to the wind in our VERY big tree. It's become quite a ritual. A real wonderful way to prepare before heading out to the grove.

I have been feeling very AT PEACE with my world lately. Enjoying my life, my family and my friends, and making a concerted effort to share my appreciation for them with them.

Plans for Lughnasadh are; after a trip to the grove, bake fresh bread (very Zen), teach the kids how to make corn dollies, and to enjoy plenty of fresh fruits, veggies and beer, at dinner.

Interesting, how the summer isn't even over yet, and already I am slipping back into my annual need for home, quiet and introspection.... right on cue.

Also, I am planning my yearly SUN ritual! Meaning a vacation where I get to lie in the sun all week. Something I truly treasure. Usually I do this in the spring, in the desert as a way to 'warm my bones' after a long foggy and rainy northern California winter...but due to scheduling this year my sun-soaking will be done on the beach in August. I love how warm (in that I don't burn easily) and golden a day of basking makes me feel...like I have just been blessed by the sun god himself. Quite worth the wait.

Blessings to all,

O.

Poison Oak Grove, News from California Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

Eris continues to reign at the home of A Druid Missal-Any. In preparation for library shelves to be built, all the boxes of books were moved outside, including the box that has the Chronicles and the Lughnasadh liturgy in it. I emailed the liturgy document to myself at work, but it wouldn't print out on two printers. The printer at home needs the software to be reinstalled after the electrician turned off the power without telling me while the computer was on (this is why the Missal-Any is especially late this issue...), and PC Doctor had to come out to fix it. The printer paper is still in a box somewhere... Thanks to one of our members a last minute call is insuring we will have our Lughnasadh scripts!

Today was the last day in the cabin. I had moved out most of the contents the previous two weekends. All that was left was a low table made of burl wood, a few tools, and an unfinished self-portrait of Emmon. These items proved to be amongst the most challenging. The burl seemed to be almost as heavy as The Dagda's club, and I'm surprised I was able to move it at all, much less able to bring it home. The portrait was almost too big to fit in the car and rode up close to the ceiling of the car. I am still having a hard time grasping losing the cabin and why. It is much too simplistic to say, "It was time to move on." Alexandra Kennedy says you need not end a relationship because a person dies. Perhaps it was time for me to have my own "cabin," one that someone could not take away, as the house is like a bigger

version of it, and it is mine and not a rental. Keeping the cabin forever wasn't realistic (the Muir Heritage Land Trust was thinking about tearing it down at one point), having this house isn't quite so.

On the way home from the cabin there was a small stand by the local pear orchard. A sign asked for people to pick pears for the Contra Costa Food Bank and I stopped and did so. I received some pears in return for the work and it reminded me of the concept of reciprocity so prevalent in ancient Celtic society. I will be offering one of the pears as a "first fruit" of the harvest at the Lughnasadh service, as well as some of the wild plums and blackberries that grow along the path up to the house.



Geasa: The Ethics in the Teaching Way of Nwyfre and A Clear Path to Rid Unhealthy Energetic Debris

By: Rhiannon Hawk, Nemeton Aweyddion

There has been nothing more profound to me than the responsibilities one takes when they make the self realization of the spirit of Nwyfre. When you work with this spiritual energy it not only awakens us to being more aware of ourselves, our surroundings, the environment, community, our homes, and mostly our commitments we make within our Nemetons--sacred space. From each step we take on our journeys to each word we speak, Nwyfre's essence flows out from within. When we are in a merged state, a scepter of light opens a door for us, a doorway to clearer perceptions and higher senses of Gwynfyd Knowledge. With these gifts and awareness comes an immense responsibility that we must not be ignorant of. To take responsibility of our brains, our hearts, and our feet on the path we walk, and words we speak of this truth, all in alignment with the scepter, a truth we hold deeply within. To keep this alignment true, is to speak the truth that we may also walk our talk, and set boundaries within ourselves not to make commitments to things that we cannot uphold. This includes the contracts we make with other people; very similar to the oath we take into the clan family. With each person we make an oath, consciously or subconsciously, this happens usually by the end of the very first time we meet. Then with friends we've known longer in this life, we continue to create geasa (rules) and make more oaths. They are broken sometimes; there should be forgiveness.

Usually when you first meet a person you will have a natural premonition about them. You will be able to feel if your energy flows harmoniously with theirs or if they clash. Upon the meeting you will be able to tell how close you will be able to be around the person, you will also be able to know how open you can be with them. At clan gatherings there should be no second

guessing about this, for if you are all merged, then you can all be open with one another and not set up negative geasa. But, this geasa is usually set up with people who are outside of the clan. This is especially true if the meeting is with another person who is unaware or not merged. It is similar to making a contract, between your energy and their energy and the reactions that occur with one another on an energetic mostly subconscious level.

On an ethical level, the geasa set up is usually contains a negative energetic reaction, and the oath set up is of positive reaction. In an oath, there are still commitments and responsibilities we take to keep the relationship to oath with our alignment of Nwyfre. If we stay true within ourselves then the oaths we take are good and stay where they are, kept healthy. But, if we stray from our commitments or our responsibilities we make in our oaths, then they can turn into geasa easily. In geasa we attract to ourselves lessons that are usually of negative or unhealthy cycles that go around and repeat. Until we can clear the patterns and return back to our original oath to stay in truth and alignment the geasa stays on a course that ends in destruction. When people have habits of going back and forth in a dualistic pattern unable to clear away energetic debt, then it is or becomes a pattern that they will be unable to heal. They will not be able to clear the debris until that energetic debt is dealt with on a much deeper level in the subconscious mind, forgiveness is made, and truth is returned, alignment is made. Even though this whole ethical way seems to be dualistic we must remember that the geasa is really like an illusion that we try to set in stone by creating it in front of ourselves. We make it so the geasa appears in our lives on a regular basis. We do this subconsciously so that we will see it more and hopefully catch onto the pattern. We do this so we will eventually see it. Like a mud puddle in your front yard that you purposely avoid everyday upon leaving or arriving at your house but you still manage to get a little mud on your feet anyway, and you still see that it's there everyday, controlling some aspect of your life. It does not go away by itself. Imagine a person with a multitude of these patterns going simultaneously, all at the same time.

We not only set up oaths or geasa with other people, but with each thing we interact with in creative, energetic, or spiritual ways. Even with the natural world around us, Nature. But, most of our patterns here begin within ourselves. In how we feel about ourselves, our physical limitations, self-esteem, egos, and the food we eat. We set up what seems right to us at the given time depending on how we feel within ourselves at that moment. Usually those who are unaware will gladly partake in what feels good to them, what ever it is, whenever they feel the needs of it. This unawareness causes the worst of health problems. Sometimes just a little knowledge can change a person's whole perception of the way they do things, the food they eat, their negative attitudes or unbalanced egos. How a person feels about life and being alive is reflected in their health and responsibility to taking care of themselves. Next, it is reflected in their daily activities, the things they do on a regular basis from the moment they wake up, how they start their day, to the activities they do before bed. Then their dreams reflect these all back to them.

In the oath taking and alignment we are taught and brought to realization that there is sacredness in all of life. All of life around us is a blessing. When we encounter this awareness we are in awe of the cosmos and our innate connection with it. With this awareness comes our oath, our responsibilities to lead our lives in health and harmony. These things go hand in hand, it is hard to have one without the other in order to be in truth within.

It is easy to see how right action and thought or wrong action and thought set up our oaths and geasa. So now you know that geasa is an energetic debt and oaths are a geasa debt release.



Geasa is based on untruth and illusions. These come from our patterns of subconscious ways that use subtle manipulations to take energy from other people, nature, or things. When we do this it is because we are then in a state of separateness, separate from our oath and alignment. When we are not in alignment, we have cut ourselves off from the natural energy flow; our body senses a need for more energy then. If we do not go within and merge with our alignment then our subconscious patterns reactivate and we, with little knowing, do things to get energy from other people. What we do with little knowing to get more energy is subtle manipulations such as; bringing up an old blame to our partners or using negative attitudes that make other people have to go out of their way for us.

By their doing this, they then give us energy. All we really need to realize is that we can connect with Nwyfre in any time that we feel we are disconnected. A lot of the time when we feel negative, we need to go within and ask ourselves questions about it. We need to word the questions the right way to get the right answers. If you ask a question and the answer doesn't seem correct or clear, then find another way of wording it. Use symbols and visualizations when you are asking the questions to help your inner knowing self to understand where you are coming from and what you are asking.

Above all else, the ethical sense that comes from our experiencing Nwyfre, is respect for life, in all its forms of beauty and all its lessons. For it is here in Abred, the Middleworld, that we are to learn to overcome our geasa and heal our patterns to become energy debt free.



In the Cymru lore, geasa could be placed on another person. In the story of Arianrhod, she places geasa on her son

Llew, and the geasa was that he would not have a name unless she named him, he would never wear armor unless she put it on him, and he would never have a partner from any of the three worlds. Symbolically, Arianrhod mirrored an energetic debt on Llew because she was tricked into giving birth to him by her own brother Gwyddion. She forced his karma to return upon him by placing geasa. Can this be done? Well yes it can but it's not ethically correct because the debt will always be there till it is dealt with and an oath is made.

I have an interesting story dealing with this energetic debt. I was at a psychic fair one time and a friend of mine bought me a booklet of Karma Tickets. The way you used them was, if you saw someone causing themselves karmic debt then you write them a ticket so that hopefully they will see what they are doing and then make amends. Well, his little Karma Ticket book I found out, also causes debt to the one who doles the tickets out. Strange things started happening every time I handed out a ticket, negative events would begin to occur. I thought I'd test it further and wrote no tickets for two weeks. Nothing bad happened. Then the week after that I wrote a couple of tickets and negative things began happening like pouring rain. I stopped altogether and burned the book and thus the geasa quit happening.

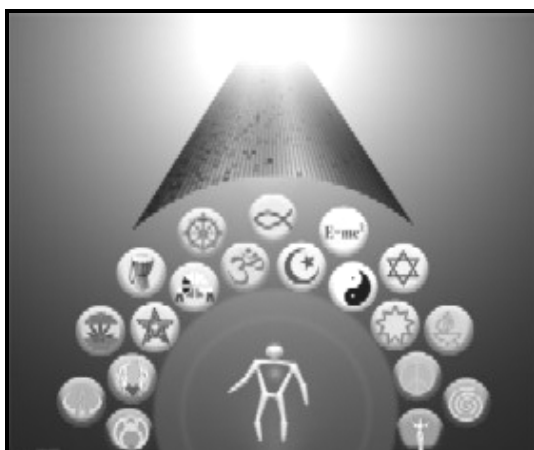
So, back to Nwyfre and living life fully, full of respect for its lessons. For without the lessons and patterns we could not grow. Even though we may at times toil in the struggle as if caught in mud, we can learn and grow from this experience. But, for those of us who are aware it is much easier than it is for those who don't know what a pattern is or where to find one. This is where we as teachers or leaders of the old ways and old lore can assist those still struggling behind us. But, then again, care needs to be taken when offering this help. That is, those struggling need to be made aware, then they have to ask. It is not for us to decide for them to erase their debt or make their journey easier. No, the kind of support and assistance they need is direction, not answers and not a spell to break them free. For how will they ever grow if they do not learn for themselves? Helping someone to be more aware and find direction is the best help we can really offer. This applies to energy healing as well, the person in need has to agree and accept the sharing of your healing gifts before you can work on them. To try and send someone healing without asking their consent is like the Karma Tickets and will create energetic debt unto you.

If you stay aligned and merged you can live more fully and have more positive experiences and emotionally and spiritually grow at a faster pace beyond energy debt. Look at your life and if you can divide up all the things you do in one a week, how much of your time gets wasted on stuff that takes you no where? Stuff that doesn't contribute to your growth or awareness? How much of what you do do you do while on auto mode, not really thinking much at all but just doing a task for the tasks sake? Like cleaning the house, it can be a pretty consistent thing in your life, especially if you have kids. Do you play music and sing while you polish the mirror, or do you get angry that someone forgot to pick up their shoes or left papers crumpled on the floor? Or do you just go on auto and think nothing but just do it anyway? Cleaning can actually be a good energy raiser that can be used to clear energy debt. Very similar to cleaning a roadside and collecting recyclables to turn in. When we volunteer to clean something outside ourselves this reflects back inward and we are then working on ourselves, on our inner brightness and debt release. So, these chores are not as boring as most think and have much more benefit than just tidying an area. When we can work in this light we are then living fully and experiencing the fullness of the action we take in pursuit of living our dreams awake. When we do these tasks on auto, we are moving slow or fast in our physical bodies but, our energetic bodies far behind and keeps lagging. Eventually we become

tiresome of getting our tasks done and our energy is drained by not fully participating, we lose energy. When we are awake and fully here, we gain energy and learn quicker when we participate.

To round off this article I will conclude that when we live, fully aware, then we are experiencing much more than someone who is not. Therefore, having much more experience will guide you to grow faster and learn quicker. This is not a selfish act, it is a selfless act because when we participate, everyone around us will experience a lifting also and we will have no geasa with them. Through this awareness we will be assisting those who wish to learn and grow, and we will need nothing in return from them, for Nwyfre will supply the energy we need to get it done.

Gadael hi Bhod!



Pagan Charity

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE

July 13, 2004

Contact: Public Information Officer, Cherry Hill Seminary, thistle@cherryhillseminary.org, 802-234-6420.

Pagan Group Included in Federal Charity Network

For the first time ever, a pagan group has been included in a US federal charity campaign. The Sacred Well Congregation and the International Institute of Cultural and Religious Studies (SWC/ICRS) have been accepted into the US' federal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

"It is a good thing for the pagan community because it brings to light that we can (and must) function on a par with mainstream charitable, service and educational non-profits, and that our services, visions and goals are just as worthy as any of theirs," said David Oringderff, an instructor in Pastoral Counseling at Cherry Hill Seminary for professional pagan ministry.

The CFC is the only authorized fund raising organization allowed to solicit charitable donations from Federal employees (civilian and military). The CFC is supervised by the Office of Personnel Management and implemented through 340 regional CFC district offices. (<http://www.opm.gov/cfc/>).

"The Combined Federal Campaign is the Federal Government's version of the United Way, except the requirements for inclusion are much more stringent, especially for the National Listing. In fact, several United Way agencies are included in the CFC," Oringderff said.

Inclusion in the CFC's national List will mean that SWC/ICRS's listing will appear in all 340 regional campaign drives. Money raised from this effort will be used to directly support the congregations' services, goals and visions including

many initiatives that have led to greater tolerance, understanding and acceptance of alternative spiritualities in inter-faith communities, the pan-pagan community, and society at-large. SWC/ICRS provides open, public venues for the practice of the Old Religions; promoting community benevolence efforts, spiritual counseling, and religious educational programs. (<http://sacredwell.org>).

Most of the funding that Sacred Well will receive from the CFC and public and private grants will be devoted to the collection and preservation of source material and converting it to digital format and making that material publicly available to scholars and researchers.

"The remainder will be used to fund community service projects such as counseling, mentoring, etc to local communities where we have a presence, institutions, and in support of military groups and initiatives for service members following alternative spiritual paths," Oringderff explained.

The Rev. Dr. Oringderff is also a founding member of Sacred Well and of the SWC International Executive Council of Clerics. He is an elder and a high priest in the Greencraft Tradition of Craft Wicca. He is a consultant to numerous interfaith groups including the DoD Armed Forces Chaplains Board. Dr. Oringderff is a clinical and forensic psychologist and resides near San Antonio in Schertz, Texas.

News



Druid Charged for Carrying Sword

From correspondents in London

July 14, 2004

A BRITISH druid was in court today charged with carrying a ceremonial sword, used for casting spells, while on a shopping trip to a local hardware store.

Merlin Michael Williams appeared at a magistrates' court in the southern English coastal town of Portsmouth wearing his full druidic regalia of green robe and blue cloak, with talismans around his neck.

The 26-year-old was charged with possessing an offensive weapon after a security guard saw him with the sheathed 90cm blade draped over his shoulder as he browsed through a branch of Wilkinson Hardware.

About a dozen fellow members of the Insular Order of Druids sat in the court's public gallery, while chief druid King Arthur Pendragon, wearing white robes with a red lion emblazoned on the front, acted as Williams's legal adviser.

The sword, named Talisen, has been confiscated by police as evidence.

"It is accepted by the Crown this (sword) was sheathed and there was no offensive action by the defendant. The issue is whether this is an offensive weapon per se," prosecutor Colin Shackel told the court.

The case was later adjourned so the prosecution could examine what Mr. Williams said were case histories which set a precedent for druid ceremonial swords not being considered offensive weapons.

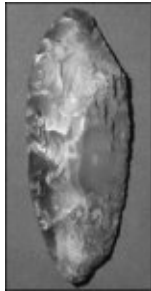
According to a spokesman for the Insular Order of Druids, ceremonial swords are used for casting spells and other ritualistic purposes.

Druids were the pagan priest class in early Britain, particularly for the Celtic tribes from around 600 BC, and are associated with sacred stone circles such as the famous site at Stonehenge, southwest England.

However, little is known about their activities and modern druids are sometimes dismissed as fantasists with a fondness for dressing up and no genuine link with the activities of the past.

Agence France-Presse

This report appears on NEWS.com.au.



Bronze Age Knife Found in Wales

Daily Post, North Wales (24 July 2004)

A North Wales housewife found a Bronze Age knife crafted 4,500 years ago while digging in her vegetable patch. Marylyn Sheldon knew she had discovered something special after unearthing the flint blade at her Llanarmon-yn-Ial home, in Denbighshire. Experts at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, confirmed it was a bronze aged blade forged around 2,500 BCE.

"I was digging in my vegetable patch to put broad beans in," she said. "I knew it was a worked flint blade as soon as I saw it." Mrs Sheldon contacted Denbighshire council and the authority's countryside service archeologist Fiona Gail was called in. "She took photos. Later on I also found some flint chippings while digging in the garden. Eventually they identified it as a flint knife dating from the Bronze Age which could have been used as a scraper," Mrs Sheldon said.

Mrs Sheldon says she may donate the knife to a local museum. The small village of Llanarmon-yn-Ial is surrounded by ancient barrows and mounds. Mrs Gale said: "It is an interesting find and provides more information about the area. I

think there were some other finds from a nearby cave in the village in the early years of the 20th century."

Editor's note: Grow your own vegetables? See what you might find! You could contribute to history as well as to your health!

Events

Max Dashu Slide Show!

A Must See for anyone interested in Goddesses, Women's Herstory, and Neolithic cultures that promoted peace and egalitarian relations between men & women.

Independent scholar Max Dashu founded the Suppressed Histories Archives in 1970, back in the days when Women's Studies departments had not yet come into being. Since then, she has photographed over 10,000 slides and created 80 slideshows on international women's history, including Women in Power, Witch Hunts and Racism: History and Lies. Max Dashu has done extensive interdisciplinary research on the European witch hunts and folk traditions about witches. She is also an artist who publishes prints and notecards highlighting powerful women. Visit her website for more information <http://www.suppressedhistories.net>

"The lineal descent of the People of the Five Nations shall run in the female line. Women shall be considered Progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil. Men and women shall follow the status of their mothers."—From the Law of the Iroquois Confederation

Date: Sat, Aug 7, 2004

Title: Icons & Matrix Slideshow

Time: 7:30pm

Leader: Max Dashu

Cost: \$10-15

Calendar

Lughnasadh, when the Sun is half-way between the Summer Solstice and Fall Equinox, will occur this year astronomically on Friday, August 6 as 15 degrees of Leo at 9:20 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, or alternatively as 16 degrees 18 minutes decl on Saturday, August 7 at 12:30 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time. Make an offering of the first fruits and vegetables from your garden or from the first apple crop in your local supermarket. If you can't cut down your own grain, celebrate by eating pasta.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

A Druid Missal-Any

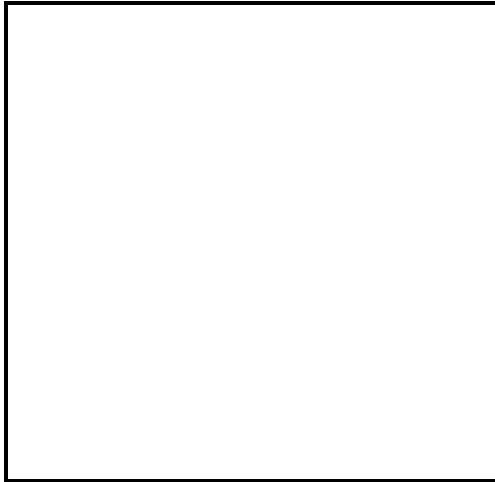
P.O. Box 406

Canyon, CA 94516

Please note the new mailing address!

E-Mail: poppinjay@earthlink.net

A Druid Missal-Any
Fall Equinox Year XLII
Vol. 20 Number 6
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Fall Equinox Essay:
Cernunnos and Dances

Reprinted from A Druid Missal-Any, Fall Equinox 1989
By Emmon Bodfish



quinox approaches! This is the time sacred to Cernunnos, the Hunter God. The cult of the horned god, the shaman-god dressed in the horns and hide of a hoofed prey-animal, is one of the most ancient themes running through Indo-European-Siberian group of cultures. Cave paintings in France and Spain dating from the Paleolithic show these figures, and he is seen again on the Gundestrup cauldron, crafted by the

Eastern European Celts under Druid auspices and direction, he wears the antlers of the stag. It would be rash to think of all the horned Eurasian gods as Cernunnos, each tribe probably had their own name for him, but the theme seems universal among those cultures which lived through the last Ice Age in Europe and Euro-asia north of the Caucasus. In the Pre-Indo-European Balkans he is associated with the goat, in Siberia with the reindeer, in England with the Red Deer, and in the Mediterranean and Ireland with the bull. (Here is another element linking Erin to Spain and the Mediterranean world as opposed to the rest of the British Isles or Gaul.)

Everywhere Cernunnos is associated with a horned and hoofed, food producing species. He may be the Being commemorated in the "horn-dances" carried out in a number of English villages up through the nineteenth century, and now exclusively in Abbots Bromley. Whether this is a local survival from Druidic or even Pre-Celtic times, or is a rite brought with them by the Anglo-Saxon invaders in the service of their cognate deity, Hern the Hunter, is not known.

Originally Cernunnos seems to have been a hunter's god, and later to have become associated with flocks and herds as "Master of the Animals." Still later he is appealed to for prosperity and fertility in general. This was the stage of the

tradition seen in the Grecian Pan cult, and in that of European "Robin Goodfellow," later distorted and debased by Christian missionaries into their "devil" cults and images. There is no devil in the Celtic Pantheon. A cosmic "bad guy" is a theological invention of a set of Middle Eastern religions including Zoroastrianism, Persian, Sumerian and Semitic as well as Christianity. Devil inventing and worshipping as we see it now is a Christian spin-off, and usually a rebellion against that same faith. It has nothing to do with the older, indigenous religions and God-figures of Europe. Cernunnos was an extremely popular figure among the farming peoples of Celtic Europe, and the Romans, newly Christianized themselves, seeing that they could not co-opt his worship, or euphemize him into a "saint," as they did a number of the other Druidic deities, debased him into a demon, i.e. the god of a rival, competing theocracy. Margaret Murray first enunciated this theory in the 1920s. Her work then fell into disrepute in the '40s and '50s, but has since been revived and vindicated. Her book, *The God of the Witches*, Oxford University Press, 1970, is worth reading if you can find it. G. Rachel Levy also sheds some light on the Mediterranean versions of his worship in her book *The Gate of Horn*, Farber and Farber, 1948. (This book is now published as *Religious Conceptions of the Stone Age and Their Influence Upon European Thought*, New York: Harper, 1963.)



The Gaelic word "Faighe" that came to be translated "prophet," originally meant "seer" and was the name of one class of Druids, solitary forest-dwelling mystics, who may have originally been connected with the worship of Cernunnos in his role as the shaman-god. "Fiagh," the Gaelic root word for "deer," is suggestive in this regard. The old "seer" whom Finn encountered beside the sacred pool was probably one such. They are associated with the Hazel, as Cernunnos may have been as Bride is associated with the Birch and Lugh with the Apple tree.

The Horned-god had a second sacred time beginning around the Winter Solstice with the tradition of the Flying Shaman. Mystic and inter-world journeyer, he descends into the Land of the Ancestors, (the sun, sinking to its nadir?) to bring back new souls, of game animals and kine and humans that new animals and Infants may be born and increase and prosperity be assured. This journey, "dedicated to the continual flow and renewal of life,*" was still being undertaken by Finn-Ugric and Siberian tribal shamans into this century. It is well documented and the beliefs behind it recorded by A. A. Popov, the Russian anthropologist in his numerous books and articles.

Cernunnos' rituals and, from the evidence of offerings left secretly at cave shrines, his worship, continued long after nominal Christianization of Europe. The Highland Calluinn (Hazel-tree) Ritual is an example of one such rite, still in practice in the nineteen century. The Protestant cleric who recorded it seems to have had no inkling of its meaning, but he writes that the people of the west Highlands, in the middle of the

seventeenth century, were "little more than heathens, having been neglected by the Roman Church." According to Dwelly, of Dwelly's Gaelic-English Dictionary fame, it is an old west Highland belief that old Calluinn night, when the winds blow from the West, is the night of the fecundation of the trees. The West is the direction of the Celtic Other World, and of the dead. One wonders if this post-Solstice celebration marks the successful return of the shaman, (as well as the sun) from the Land of the Dead with his sack of new souls and spiritual gifts from the Ancestors. (See the Yule Druid Missal-Any for 1986 for the "Santa" Claus-Cernunnos-Flying shaman connection.)

*Quote from the R.D.N.A New and Full Moon Day Service



News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

It's the summer and Carleton has been quiet. However the tree and flowers are beautiful and inspiring here, worthy of just finding time and sitting outside contemplating, or just doing the work one might've done inside. The weather has been a little strange; some of August was surprisingly cool. The Carleton grove will have started up by the time this appears, though as I right it is still two weeks away.

Sylvagaia/Elder Grove: News from France

Hi folks

I feel it's time for me to move on and I just want to say good bye and thanks. Seems the most decent thing to do. I haven't talked a lot lately. The computer's been broke for about three months, but I've enjoyed the time when we did talk. Thanks Stacey and Mike, you're very kind people. Brightest blessings to you.

Please consider the Sylvagaia Proto Grove as missing in action. It never really got into action anyway, coward that it is.... Nobody's fault.

Life is very tough and complicated at the moment and we've got to work extremely hard to get things going again. Sometimes we feel a bit depressed. It's not easy seeing your crops blown away by the beautiful but often uncaring hands of nature. When the Mother has a scratch, the continents shake. Farming is weird business.

I've learned a lot from Reformed Druidism and will keep many of your insights and humour close to me, as I will stumble on, figuring out my own strange and personal form of earth spirituality.

See you somewhere

Willem

Awen Proto-Grove: News from Calgary

Greetings everyone!

Awen Grove is a small grove that is starting out in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We have been in existence for just under a year, but all oak trees start out as little nuts, so we should be ok...

Our focus is on the Path of Service: Service to the Gods, Service to the Community and Service to the Self

We have done a few public rituals, our first being Samhain 2003, and we are beginning to make ourselves known to the general community for local community service through volunteer efforts and event planning.

All of us are looking forward to interacting more with other folks within the RDNA!

Blessings,

Athelia Nihtscada, Senior Druid of Awen Grove
awengrove@yahoo.ca

Aelven Star Grove: News from Pennsylvania

Greetings from Aelvenstar Grove!

After an 'interesting' summer, I am continuing Ogham studies and have been gathering sticks for magick and divination. I made a really neat wand last year, and am just about to put finishing touches on my staff.

Other news.... A website is in the works and is coming along slowly but surely. Will keep you posted

The Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire runs August 1 through October 24, 2004 and we are organizing an outing for any and all who would like to join our small group for the outing. Please email me if interested: aelvenstargrove@yahoo.com

Peace and blessings in the Mother,

Autaini

Arch Druidess Aelvenstar Grove

Digitalis Grove: News from D.C.

Robert Larson's death deeply affected me, as his influence in founding the Berkeley Grove and publishing of the Druid Chronicles (Evolved) led to the re-emergence of my Carleton Grove and inspired me to publish ARDA. I'm in the process of trying to get the Order of Danu (10th) established this year for departed Druids, and conferring with the Patriarch of Sirona to resume the filling of the Higher Orders. I'll tell you later how it works out. Right now, I'm preparing for the approach of hurricane Ivan and the arrival of a second dog in my home.

Creeks-Called-Rivers Grove: News from West Virginia

Creeks-Called-Rivers Grove has dried up and blown down the road to West Virginia. We're having another go here in WV as Little Mountains Grove. So far there have been no fatalities, so I'd say that's good.

—Darren

Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross – Muskogee/Mother Grove Oklahoma

The editor extends her apologies for the belated posting of the Muskogee/Mother Grove news. Partially due to moving and partially because she didn't think anyone would actually send anything there, she had not checked her P.O. box. Here is the Muskogee/Mother Grove news from Beltaine 2004.

It's been a while since I wrote an update about what's going on with the grove. Honestly we've been having activity,

but nothing exactly what I'd call newsworthy. But now, some threads of activity are weaving themselves together in an identifiable fashion. For instance, the thread of activity that dates back to the late summer of '03. August to be exact. It was about a dream. I dreamed that I was standing beside Salt Creek (a tributary to the Arkansas River below Brushy Mountain, just outside Muskogee) and there came seven thin, sick head of cattle out of the creek. I awoke. I knew this dream. It was the second half of Pharaoh's first dream, signifying seven years of famine. Why the Old Ones were using biblical imagery to communicate the point, I do not know, but I'd learned from dreaming prophetic dreams and 'seeing' things not to ignore dreams such as this.

Making a common sense review, and a moral inventory of the ramifications of both not sharing the dream and sharing it, I decided to write about the vision-ream. The first time I broke the news of the dream was in the MOCC Free Voice (Sept. '03) making reference to a 2002 dream that probably dealt with the sacking of museums and libraries of Baghdad. I admitted that there were those who would wag their heads and label me a doomsayer, but I had to share the dream and what I had felt that it had revealed. I wrote: "if we are to hold out against this turbulent season, we must hold fast to our principles, our customs, and our traditions. We must learn to cooperate and to build together. Our teachings are the foundation of hope, and our traditions are the very blueprint of stability. Let us also use vision to be overcomers. I am not a doomsayer, and I believe that we can weather the coming season and come out smelling more or less like a rose." I anticipated a backlash of persons making mention of the Archdruid going insane. Oddly, there was a consensus that hard times did appear on the horizon, and they also seemed extended and difficult.

Not being the good, little, obedient clergy person, I found myself where I've been several times before. I was endangering future non-profit status as a church for my local grove by commenting on political and economic topics... perhaps because I am a Druid and Druidism has historically overstepped polite boundaries a number of times, perhaps because there's a higher law than a tax code. In October's issue I revisited the seven years of hard times between 2003-2012, this time urging the use of wisdom. "We ought always to seek out wisdom. Not only in facing the future, but, in confronting our own mistakes and our own shadows. We are slightly less than perfect; though we are hardly ever confronted with this fact... we have our shortcomings. We have our shadow selves. It is unavoidable... Wisdom, like the taproot of the oak, runs deep to reach precious water. So when we put wisdom to use, it goes deep within and all around us to search out life giving and life affirming answers. Not just metaphysically, but readily put to use to meet most every need."

November covered sacrifice. December covered cooperation. "Traditions change. Wisdom is oft unheeded and under-appreciated. Sacrifice often seems wasted. But no one can deny the worth of cooperation.

"I am often held at awe at the sheer raw power of cooperation. That power arises from the fact that when you have two people agreeing on one thing, the power of consensual reality meets the magick of faerie sight. This concept is lost on no one. In the Bible, it manifestly states that 'where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.' The meeting place of mind, spirit and body is the place where the divine can intervene. It is where concept takes on the power of force. Cooperation is where things get done. It is the wellspring of all accomplishment.

"Cooperation is the antithesis of self-serving pride. One cannot succeed in cooperation when the do not compromise one with the other, because that is the very nature of cooperation.

More than one agrees upon an idea, both come to a mutually beneficial agreement as to how to accomplish the end, and they compromise on self-sufficiency by developing independence. That is cooperation.

"I freely admit, in a religion such as Druidism, so individualistic that to mention cooperation seems to some to be a dirty word, it is almost an alien invasion. After all, doesn't cooperation mean that we must give up some of our freedom? Well, Druids have their role historically being involved in Order and working together, too. Be fair about it. In the MOCC Order of Ascension and Ordination (specifically in the Ritual of the Staff) all the MOCC clergy are charged 'to together bear both responsibility, co-workers upon the common land.' Cooperation gets that dirt underneath the fingernails.

"Working together toward a common goal. For us, we must look at cooperative economics, cooperative ventures, and cooperative effort. No one is left behind in our way of thinking. This is the very basis of what we teach socially: that we are part of a World Tribe that we form a Tuath—a tribe—with strong ties as long as we honor those ties and do not walk away from them. With all the talents we have been gifted with, there is no such thing as a 'weak link' in our chain. Everyone has their contribution to make; everyone has their unique place within the circle."

And with Yule, I closed the secular calendar year and began my annual sabbatical. It's a bit of tradition that I observe between Yule and Ostara, and it helps to refresh the spirit, so I take it without fail, unrepentant of my doing so.

I dreamed again. I was in a coracle, one of those little Irish boats of wickerwork with watertight skins over it, looking for all the world like a flipped over turtle shell floating in the water. All around me were bundles of tinder, and I know the flaming arrows soon would be coming down. I was going out on the Western Sea, but couldn't see my own destination.

There were three cases before me, three bundles in midnight blue velvet. All of a sudden, the coverings were removed. Revealed were three items, all in heavily wrought silver of fine craftsmanship, fashioned to depict grapevines, fruit and knot work all woven together. The first item is a drum, the second a harp, and the third a chalice.

One must assume that, being upon the Path, staying in one spot can be a bad thing. One either tends and appreciates this spot, or one steps again onto the Path and appreciate the ever-changing lessons that are both the love and the spice of life. To quote Julia Child, "Life itself is the proper binge." And in appreciation of life, I took the lesson of the year-king and after 19 years of tending to the MOCC—Muskogee/Mother Grove (9 years unofficially, 10 years officially), this humble Druid stepped down from the Archdruidic Chair.

You know the trick where the magician pulls the tablecloth off the table and all the place settings remain undisturbed? Yeah, it's kind of like that. Eyebrows raised, there was some resignation to the fact, but for a while nothing happened. Then some voices came out to the fore noticing something, or rather a lack of something.

"Tom, anything going on with the College this weekend?" Even though the official name of the group is the MOCC these days, members of the M/M Grove still use the shortened form of the old name, "The College." "Nope," I respond. Interesting thing about the word "nope." It does not mean "no" as many people assume. Otherwise, you could say "I have nope money in my pocket." You can, however, say with complete assurance that other people will understand you (at least in the Old South) that ever-famous quadruple negative: "Nope, y'all, I ain't got none nohows." "Nope" takes on the connotation of an observance akin to the Maine "a-yup," except that it means the

exact opposite. It smacks of a commentary that not only is a negative response to a question, but also effectively communicates disinterest or negates the preceding comment or question with one fell swoop.

So, one by one, I watched first this one, then that one, come up and view the mantle of office. They take note of what it means, reflect on what being an Archdruid would mean to them. "Tom, anything going on with the College this weekend?" "Nope," I respond, "still waiting on someone to step up to the bat. I can't do it when I'm gone." They look at me. "I don't have enough experience," they say. "Experience is the best teacher," I say, "It's the only way to learn."

At Ostara it was time for the blessing of the fields. With the time of the rite nearing, no one had truly stepped to the fore, and it was becoming obvious that the post of Archdruid was about to become a communally held post, mostly so that people could get their feet wet in a leadership role. Br. Shadowdancer (Mark) was the first to start calling around and organizing. In just a few days, a rite was thrown together. Nothing fancy, but a wholly legitimate rite with seven people in attendance. At ritual's closing, we held hands. Together we seven set forth the Faith. "With these words, we bless the fields..."

Rowan-Oak Grove: News from Tulsa, OK

Rowan-Oak Grove has weathered the rainiest summer in my memory, and a very trying several months resulting from actions of people within the grove and others outside belonging to another druid organization bringing the issue to our attention. the situation has finally been brought to a sense of closure and although it very nearly caused our demise as a grove we have emerged stronger though with a smaller congregation. arch-druid valens of the Circle of Cybele, one of the groves in the rowan-oak family is in texas at the moment, and we have not heard from sis jokers wild arch druidess of our texas grove in a month or so but they were having problems of their own. TBRSC our wagner grove has reported that all is well for them and has shown strong support of our actions throughout our own troubles. while waiting for the rain to quit so my roof can be fixed we called a temporary halt to classes being held at my home during inclement weather. Mabon is our next scheduled rite and classes are tentatively being held at the park near my home. there have been several births and deaths within our congregation including the loss of sis white tigress' two cats, one to a brutal killing by persons unknown, and the arch-druidess own beloved familiar adonis the perfect kitty. however a new kitty has come to live in our hearts for the arch-druidess was given a large grey tortishell tabby named Hercules for his strength and very talkative. the grove puter recently got sick and had to have windowsxp reinstalled and we have been troubleshooting for almost a week tracking down drivers and glitches in programming. but at least the puter is working reasonably well. it is scheduled for a new hard drive and a fresh install of programs so the current hd can be reformatted and used to build another tower. Our online grove is growing again and recently added a new member who is considering joining the main offline grove with his entire family.. well i guess that about sums up the news for the Rowan-Oak Grove family may Mabon bring all druids throughout the world a fresh sense of renewal and a harvesting of the lessons learned throughout the summer with a new perspective.

healing, light, and peace to you all

M.S. White Raven arch-druidess
Rowan-Oak Grove
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dravidia Grove: News from Indiana

All is well here in Southern Indiana, we have had a very rainy season, and it has not been a good Summer due to it...Have taken time to download more files for my database, and have spent the time reading some of my books that I just acquired...

Rogue River Protogrove: News from Oregon

Our group celebrated Fall Equinox over the Labor Day holiday by camping in Oregon's Rogue River National Forest.

Looking ahead to Samhain, a new member and Priestess of Ana is creating for our group a very special ritual honoring Ana, Welsh Goddess of the Realms of the Dead. Please email us for details, as we will hold this gathering in October on the banks of Big Butte Creek, which is at the heart of the Rogue Valley's watershed.

The first weekend in October we're also looking forward to a visit by the intrepid Gordon Cooper, Druid scholar and member of one of the few surviving Woodcraft organizations. Gordon had planned to attend a Cthulhu Mythos convention in Portland, OR instead, but the rugose tentacles will have to ooze ichor without him. (For background on Woodcraft and Earthcraft, please see: www.Earthcrafters.org)

Fall blessings,

Aigeann

Sunset Proto-Grove: News from California

Things have been going well here personally, spiritually etc. I am in the middle of some legal stuff that is going to drone on for a few more months. Hopefully it will be resolved by Yule so I can spend my week off baking and concentrating on my family unit, gingerbread, apple cider, and evening logs in the fireplace as I like to do.

Have been having intense talks with a friend about the nature of humankind. I always am so disappointed in the human race's (as a whole. Think politics and general international consensus on foreign aide etc.) unwillingness to see beyond themselves and their current situations to the future. She thinks I am naive to expect it of others because she does not think that empathy, caring, and foresight are necessarily basic human traits (outside of the family and close friendship unit.) for the mass population. This has led to some interesting discussions. I am thankful to have an outlet for 'intellectual conversation'. The kids don't do too well with that- at least at the same level, and being a business major not too many of my classmates are very into deeper intellect either. (Thus the nick-name at school - 'Tree-Hugger'.)

I am still looking forward to those wonderful cool months and long 'crunchy' evening walks in the leaves whenever I can squeeze one in. I hope everyone is doing well!

O.

Poison Oak Grove, News from California

Publisher of "A Druid Missal-Any"

One night while eating dinner there was a slow crrrr-aaacccckkkk and crash! I said out loud, "What the hell was that?" My first thought was oh no, fire! (We had two fires in Canyon about a month ago, one very close to the house and were ready to evacuate), but then reason kicked in and I realized that's the sound of a tree falling in the woods! It didn't sound like it hit any buildings and we went out to investigate. A huge live oak

tree had fallen across the path to the house and down the little glen almost to the deck of the people who live below. Other neighbors were coming out to see too and check to see if anything was damaged. Apparently it was heard from quite a distance as other residents of the town were asking about it at the post office.

I saw at this as an "opportunity" rather than an inconvenience. It was a well-timed gift. We will not want for firewood this winter, even if the neighbors take some, which is important as a wood burning stove is our heat source. And no one or creature was hurt and nothing was damaged. Cernunnos was looking out for us! A neighbor told me that it was Celtic folklore that oak trees are known for protecting people and not falling on them. If any one knows more about this please let us know.



A Passing...

It was Bob Larson who brought the RDNA to California from Carleton. He founded the Berkeley Grove in 1968, which later spawned Live Oak Grove, Hazelnut Grove, Birch Grove, Duir De Danu Grove, Tuatha De Danu Grove, Baccharis Grove, and Poison Oak Grove. The traditions most of us in the California Groves follow can be traced back to Bob. He made Druidism come alive with his interest and vitality. He is responsible, along with Isaac Bonewits, for the Druid Chronicles (Evolved), a revision of the Druid Chronicles made in 1976.

I had the pleasure to meet Bob on a couple of occasions, one of them before my Third Order ordination where he and the AD asked me to cover my ears so they could discuss the mystery of mysteries of the Order. He came to our Beltaine service in 2002 and gifted the grove with a bottle of fine Irish whisky.

Bob was a subscriber to A Druid Missal-Any and had wanted to write an article on Dalon Ap Landu. His brother sent me the Epistle he had been working on, which Mike will include in ARDA 2.

Bob passed away on Lughnasadh, 6 August.

Obituary for Robert George Larson

By Lawrence T. Larson

Robert (Bob) Larson was born in Waukegan, Illinois to Lawrence and Margaret Larson on August 31st, 1943. He passed away in Oakland, CA on August 6, 2004. Bob was a graduate of Waukegan Township High School and advanced his education at Carleton College from 1961 to 1965. At that time, so typical of the 1960s, Bob became a free spirit, grew his hair long, bought a guitar and headed west. Arriving in Oakland, he first worked as a longshoreman and for the last 25+ years, as a printer.

Bob loved to play guitar, mandolin and banjo, and for several years, participated in Renaissance Fairs. He collected and read books with a passion and had a particular interest in all things Celtic/Irish.

Bob never married. He was preceded in death by his mother, father, and older brother Donald. He is survived and was loved by his two older brothers, Richard and Lawrence; two nephews, Lawrence and Eric; three nieces Jacqueline, Christina and Kathleen; one grandnephew and four grandnieces. We will him Godspeed and a hearty welcome into God's Kingdom. Funeral arrangements are by the Neptune Society of Oakland. He will be interred with his parents in Warren Cemetery in Gurnee, Illinois.

Editor's note: Bob's brother Lawrence requests if anyone has any memories of Bob that they would like to share that he would appreciate receiving them. Please send them to A Druid Missal-Any, address at the end of this newsletter, or to poppinjay@earthlink.net and I will forward them on to him.



Robert Larson's Memorial Ritual

By Stephen Abbott, Hazelnut Grove,
Transcribed with notes by Tegwedd Shadow Dancer,
Duir de Danu Grove

Editor's note: Stephen and Bob were longtime friends since the early days of the RDNA in California in the 1970s. It was with them that the "Celtic Think Tank" was born: they and other druids would gather at the print shop where Bob worked to talk, share ideas, tell awful druish puns, and basically spend time with good friends. Stephen considered Bob to be one of his mentors. Stephen did this memorial ritual for Bob after finding out about his passing into the arms of the Earth Mother and has submitted it for publication in A Druid Missal-Any

I set up the ritual in phases, trying to give it some form of structure.

Phase 1: I performed a ritual bath to cleanse myself mentally, psychically, and physically. The bath was also helping me become more alert and awake. Now I was ready to perform the rite.

Phase 2: I set aside a ritual space in one of the vacant rooms. In this room, I already had some of my wooden furniture. I placed my two spears, my two staves, and my altar in the room. I set up my Tibetan shaman's drum, my three sickles, and a bronze candlestick with a single black candle. The candle, of course, was new. I placed the Druid books from Michael Scharding on one of the wooden shelves on the right side of the room. I then placed my Stonehenge pieces on either side of the Druid books. On the Altar, I placed my magical teddy bear, which I identified to a degree with Terlach as a big teddy bear. For those who did not know him, he was a very large and tall man with long dark hair. [He was also a very gentle sweet man. te]

I placed my divination board on the floor in front of my altar. On the altar I placed my wizard's head, which bore an uncanny resemblance to Robert. Tegwedd called him Terlach, but I always just called him Robert. [I called him Terlach because that was his Druid name. te] I wore my ritual robe that Tegwedd had made for me years earlier. This robe has the symbol [if you can, Mike, insert the Druid sigil here. I have no way of doing so here. te] the shield and two spears on the front and back. I also wore my Druid ribbons. I placed my two tap lights on either side of my divination board.

Phase 3: The Ritual: The ritual itself was quite simple. I started it out by ritually lighting the black candle. In this ritual, the black candle represented death and the dark realm. Next, I called upon the four quarter and the four elements, plus Spirit in the Sacred Center. Then I called upon the Earth Mother and Dalon Ap Landu to join the rite. Afterwards, I sang the "Earth Mother" song. Badly, I'm afraid, since I was a little rusty. As we all know, our gods and goddesses have a sense of humor. Next I consecrated and shared the Waters of Life. I transformed the Waters of Sleep into the Waters of Life [because of certain metabolic peculiarities, Stephen cannot have alcohol. te] Because of the move, I did not have access to any true Waters of Life. I used the wooden chalice, which had been used in my rituals for the Hazelnut MotherGrove. Next I got rather personal and simply talked to Robert as if he were in the room with me. I related to him my memories of him and the many rituals that he and I had participated in together. I related to him about going to his apartment to play war games. Robert had been an avid war game player. I told him that I still had all the games he had given me such as Winter War, Soldiers, and The Franco-Prussian War. All of these games had been published by SPI (Simulations Publications Inc.). I related to him the time when he had given Gaelic classes to members of the Grove. I told him I still possessed the Gaelic handouts he had given to us after every class. I had put those handouts together and put them into a Druid notebook. I related to him all the funny things that had happened when he and I were together. I told him I would miss him and how bad I had felt when I lost contact with him after moving to Sacramento now some 10 years ago. [Has it really been 10 years? te]

Phase 4: I sang the "Lady's Bransle" and "The Lughnasadh Song", after which I had a period of silence. I commented afterwards about his passing on Lughnasadh and that he would return from the otherworld with many stories and tales about his adventures there.



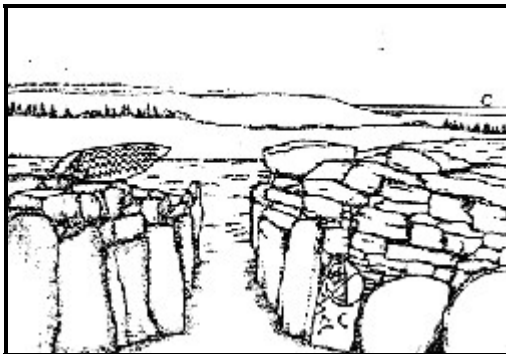
Phase 5: I called on the Earth Mother and Dalon Ap Landu to bless his path to the otherworld and to guide and protect him while he resided there. Then there was another moment of silence. I performed a divination with cards from the following Tarot decks.

1. Was the "Celtic Tarot," which oddly enough is an Italian deck.
2. "Tarot of the Druids"
3. "The Faery Wicca Tarot"

The first card was from the Druid Tarot. It was the King of Swords. (upright) I felt Robert's presence strongly in this card. Like Robert, the King of Swords depicts a king of great intellect and in this deck he is none other than King Arthur in middle age. The card depicts a man of great intellect and wisdom, which fits Robert to a T. This card gave to the reading the element of Air and the quarter of the east. A card of pure intellect and wisdom. The next card came from the Faery Wicca deck. The card was the four of Fire. The card's title was Lord of Completion. This seems appropriate as well. It is also known as the Lord of Perfected Work. This seemed to fit. Robert always tried to do his best and make things look good. This card brings to the reading the element of Fire and the quarter of the south. The next card came from the Italian "Celtic" deck. The 6 of Cups. This card's title is the "Lady of Pleasure." Robert loved to have a good time. He seemed to love being alive. This card gave the reading the element of Water and the quarter of the west. The last card was from the Italian Druid deck. The 9 of Pentacles. The card's title is the "Lady of Material Gain." Robert was concerned about money and all things earthy when I knew him. He wasn't rich, but I believed he lived comfortably. That card gave the reading the element of earth and the quarter of the north. That completed the Tarot layout. All the four elements were represented. The next card would be the Ogham card from "The Celtic Oracle." This card was the Spindle OIR. This is one of the vowel sounds after the basic 20. This Ogham card relates to the concepts of lighting and beauty. I read the passage assigned to this card.

I ended this phase by saying my final goodbyes to my friend and fellow Druid Robert. I thanked the Earth Mother and Dalon Ap Landu for attending the rite. I then drew the Druid sigil three times and spoke the words "Peace, Peace" and "Peace." I then returned the waters to the Mother by pouring them into the fish pond in the back yard. This concluded the Druid sendoff of AD Robert Larson. May he stay in our memories forever. May his passing not be in vain and may the Earth guide and protect his spirit till he returns to this world again.

Stephen Warren McCauley Abbott
AD Hazelnut MotherGrove (in abeyance)



Thoughts on Becoming an Elder

By Stacey Weinberger

I was listening to Ashley Mac Isaac's version of The Mull of Kintyre on the way home from work a couple of weeks ago. It was the song I had been listening to while driving back from the pre-adoption meeting of my youngest cat who had gone missing the night before; somehow I felt playing it might help him come back. I was crying as the words evoked a time past, and my thoughts couldn't help but turn to Bob Larson, whose passing I just received news of just the day before.

I had not been in the Berkeley Grove when Bob was AD, but have heard tales of him playing the recorder as members were arriving or how he could command a service, his presence, and his sense of humor. I did have the opportunity to meet him three times, one of which he came to our Beltaine service, where I did get to the privilege of hearing his sonorous voice sing the Earth Mother chant...I have regrets on not getting to know him better. His was a wealth of knowledge never to be tapped. I do know he was working on an article about Dalon Ap Landu, Lord of each and every Grove invoked in every RDNA service, but it will never see the light of day. This is the second passing of an elder in the RDNA (Emmon Bodfish in 1999), and it made me realize this will be starting to happen as the first generation of RDNA Druids get older. Very sobering. The next generation of Druids are becoming the elders, my generation!

But wait, I'm not old enough yet, I don't know enough yet, I'm not wise, I'm still learning! How could I be an elder? But the signs are there. Both parents are dead, there is no "big person" to go to for even the mundane world questions. My role models were dying off. With the death of my mentor Emmon five years ago I was not having much success of finding a new teacher with whom I was as sympathetic and who knew what I needed to know to continue on the path of my personal training as a Druid that he had set me upon and that had the potential of becoming as comfortable as a pair of brown loafers. Ironically it wasn't until after Emmon died that I "received the calling" to Third Order. I was on my own, with just a letter from him from the early 90s when I inquired about attaining Thirds, what his requirements were, etc, but I hadn't been ready then and merely played with my studies. After he died I was finally ready but my teacher, mentor, and friend was gone. I was left to muddle my way on my own. In the meantime I become the mover and shaker of my Grove, begin study of Scottish Gaelic, start reading books on Celtic history, cultural/anthropological Shamanism, maintain the old grove site, start publishing the Missal-Any again, become a moderator of the RDNA email list, and am dragged kicking and screaming to the office of Arch Druid of my Grove. I start getting inquiries from people wanting to be ordained.

But wait, I'm becoming the person I would want as a mentor (ignoring the foibles of course). The various people I thought could possibly become teachers are treating me as an equal and value my opinion and sometimes even, gasp, look to me for advice. Is this taken to be a sign? Is it time to assume the mantle of elder now? Is it time to become my own role model as someone suggested? Is it ok? I know I will never know enough or be wise enough to my satisfaction, and there is always that nagging doubt that someone will find out those truths and point and laugh. Still, this coat does feel kind of comfy now as I sit by the fire on a cold fall night, stirring the embers a bit, and look out at the stars.



Taranis Tracts

REFORMED DRUIDS OF NORTH AMERICA
COUNCIL OF TARANIS to the
COUNCIL OF DALON AP LANDU

Greetings to my brothers and sisters of the Reform,
I bear good news and hope you are well.

This morning after a long and difficult vigil in the midst of the tornados, lightning and howling winds of Ivan that pummeled my grove of D.C. with heavy rains, but fortunately left none harmed, I have now fully assumed the mantle and responsibilities of the Patriarchy of the Order of Taranis at eight A.M. on the eighteenth of September 2004. The storm is over and the Council of Taranis was established and convened at eighth street SE of Washington DC at a Starbucks coffee house. I hope to cautiously reign with wisdom, humility and compassion over its functions for as long as I am able.

The following ground rules for the Council were established. When I pass on or step down, the Council is encouraged to continue to meet without me, on their own, until a

new Patriarch is established by the Order of Sirona to replace me. Each full member has an equal vote, and voting shall be by a 2/3 majority of all those who reply to the council's business after a reasonable effort has been made to reach them, and the Patriarch must be definitely be informed of the vote before and afterwards to be official. Proposals unfinished after three months have elapsed from the date announced are voided. Votes must be made in person to the Patriarch or sent by phone, fax, e-mail or other electrical means. No members can be expelled from or barred from participating in the Order, except with both the assent of the Patriarch and the 2/3 majority vote of the council, and it is hard to think that such a situation should ever happen.

The first order of business, over a triple-shot Java-chip frappacino, at our full council was to establish the ordination liturgy to bring in more members in the future. A slightly modified version of Nozomi Kibou's unofficial service was unanimously adopted and was arranged so that any priest/ess wishing to enter the Order could perform it themselves, after being invited, by any member of Taranis, to join the council's exploration of the mysteries of the weather. The full text of the ordination will be published later in ARDA 2 this fall. The symbol of the Order is decreed to be a black and yellow ribbon bound together in three knots (and worn as a maniple over either hand) to remind us that Druidry is not only about speaking with thunder, not only of speaking with the whisper of winds, and not to hesitate to choose which option when the course is certain enough. The other symbol of the Order is an umbrella or golf club to be carried as is comfortable, preferably a yellow and/or black one.

The second order of business, conducted at nine A.M., was to unanimously elect Irony Sade to assume upon himself the Patriarchy of the Order of Llyr, the Ninth Order in accordance with the power invested in our Council by Reformed tradition. Nine cheers were cried out in celebration. The council here now bids that Brother Irony forthwith quickly devise and adopt an appropriate ceremony, become consecrated and convene the Council of Llyr. We chose Irony for he has shown great wisdom of the land and also from the extensive experience he has from his travels by and on the many oceans and seas of the world. He is skilled in the ways of boating, fishing and swimming; and he will know whom to call and join his Order. The Council and Patriarch wish him great success in his endeavors.

The third order of business, conducted at ten A.M. was to induct David Fisher as an honorary member of our Council, with no voting privileges or responsibilities, but with freedom to address the council with his wisdom and bear its symbols. If he should later choose to fully become a member of the council, that request is granted at such time it is made.

The fourth order of business, conducted at ten thirty A.M. was to invite Samuel Adams, the Druid of Saint Olaf College to join the Order's Council at his convenience. We await you.

With that concluded, the Council of Taranis wished to you, my brothers and sisters, fair winds and pleasant weather, then called a recess and finished its business in good humor.

I hereby verify that all this is true, and submit this to you by the power of electricity.

Yours in the Mother,
 Michael James Anthony Ulhail Scharding,
 ODAL, Gr., Be.
 Patriarch of Taranis
 Day 49 of Foghamhar, Year XLII of the Reform

* * * * *



REFORMED DRUIDS OF NORTH AMERICA
 COUNCIL OF SIRONA

Peace be unto all humanity, and in particular, unto our brothers and sisters in the Reform.

At 2100 hours UTC on this date, every patriarch or priest consecrated to Sirona being present, the Patriarch declared the Council of Sirona to be in session.

After reverent waiting, the Council turned its attention to expressions of hope, from some of those of the Reform, for consecration of a Patriarch of Taranis. The Council decided, in one voice, that the time of waiting has been fulfilled, and directed the Patriarch of Sirona to inform Michael Scharding, he of that name who was ArchDruid of the Mother Grove, that he is declared Patriarch-Elect of Taranis, and bid him cause a ceremony to be conducted, consecrating him to that Spirit's service. The Council and Patriarch convey to him best wishes for a crackling and spirit charged conduct of his vocation.

Peace be unto all humanity, and in particular, unto the Patriarch of Taranis and his whole Order.

I, G. R. Zempel, only Patriarch of Sirona, have set my hand to this on behalf of the Council of Sirona.

—G. R. "Gary" Zempel



Interview with David Fisher

By Stephen Crimmins,
 Archdruid Emiritus of Carleton Grove

I recently had the privilege of transcribing an interview of the man who is generally known as the primary founder of Reformed Druidism, David Fisher. I was given the ability thanks to Michael (Mec) Scharding, who conducted the interview, as

well as to Eric Hilleman for lending me transcribing equipment. The first thing that came into my mind was: how did Scharding manage to get an interview with Fisher who, I had thought, was too embarrassed of Druidism to give an interview. The key, Scharding insisted, was following up on his original call, nothing more. My image of David Fisher has been changing for some time since I was introduced to the contents of the International Druid Archives last year. Listening to the interview has changed my opinion further. This article is an attempt to distill some of what I have learned about our heretofore legendary founder, as well as to share some of the gems of the interview. For those who want to read the complete transcript, it will be published in the oral history section of ARDA II. If you can't wait that long, you can probably pester myself or Scharding.

Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* paints a picture of Fisher similar to the one that I had until recently. According to it "In 1964 the [religion requirement] regulation was abolished but, much to the surprise-and it is said, horror-of the original founders, the RDNA continued to hold services and spread its organization far beyond the college campus. One of the founders, David Fisher, who wrote many of the original rituals, is now an Episcopal priest and teacher of theology at a Christian college in the South, having apparently washed his hands of the RDNA." I know, moreover, that this opinion is fairly wide spread among those people I've talked to but I have recently come to realize that this is not exactly true.

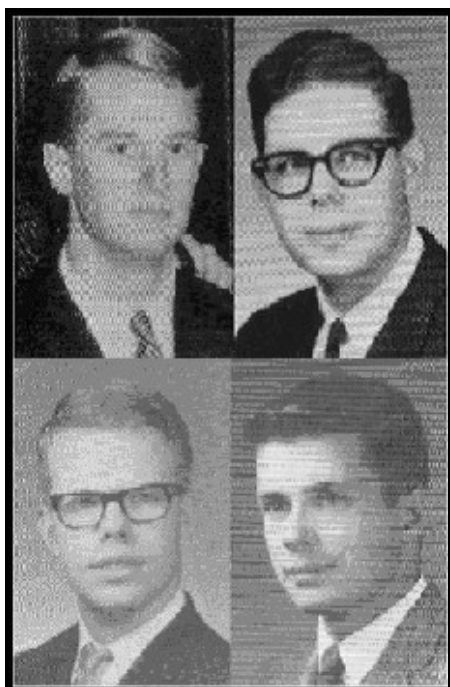


Figure 1 Fisher, Cherniack, Nelson, and Frangquist.

It is, of course, widely known that there were actually three founders: Norman Nelson, Howard Cherniack, as well as David Fisher. However, for some reason, Fisher has gotten most of the blame. For instance, Joan Carruth's "Epistle to the Myopians" asks "May the Earth-Mother keep David the Fisher in Her sight and bless him, for this is all his fault." But, since he was accompanied by two other founders why is he held above the others? Certainly, while Cherniack forgot about Druidism, Nelson has continued to be active to the present day.

The idea of Fisher as primary founder has precedents from the earliest days. He was the first person credited in the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)* as preaching the word of Reformed

Druidism, most likely because he was the first Arch Druid. However, Fisher is also often credited with bringing in the majority of the customs of the Druids. In so far as Fisher was the Arch Druid he may have had a special burden to come up with liturgical material. According to the *Druid Chronicles* and other sources Fisher claimed that he had been made a Druid in high school. However, Fisher has refuted this, saying that he "never claimed any special consecration by a Druid in England." If that is true Fisher was never under the burden of creating material by himself as a "pre-existing" ritual.

Regardless, it seems clear that much of the creation of the Reformed Druids was shared. As he notes in the interview, "we sort of dreamed a piece up here and a piece up there, improvising as we went along the way people, I suppose, sometimes do." This is not to say, either, that Fisher was not the creator of much of the material. For instance he suggested that he "must've dreamed" the sigil up, though he doesn't remember much about his inspiration for and ideas about it except that the idea of "closing the circle" was important. The meditations were also his addition to the services. On the other hand many other parts of the Druids were the creation of some of the other founders and early members. Fisher credits the higher orders to a suggestion by Nelson and notes that the tenets are the only lasting contribution of Cherniack. Fisher credits the liturgy as something that "I and Norman Nelson wrought in 1963 on Saturdays," though he does not indicate whether the work was equal or not. Indeed the balance of the initial work will probably be left an open question for the future because, as Fisher points out, "I didn't take notes at the time because, obviously, I didn't think I was founding something for thirty, forty years..."

However, in the period after the founding, Fisher, of the three founders, did have a tendency to be a guiding force. Among his early letters are responses to early council proposals, not only accepting some and rejecting others, but also requesting changes in parts, as well sending his own proposals to the council. This occurred despite feeling that Druidism did not meet a need for him and, moreover, that he was being drawn by his increasing Christianity away from Druidism. However, a partial answer could be found in a later letter in which Fisher explained his desire for the proposals as trying to combat over complicated organization that his own actions had inspired. Hence he felt responsible, as a founder, to at least guide what he had started. However, in that type of action it is easy to see Fisher in a parental role that is missing from the later actions of either of the other two founders. This guidance indicates both that Fisher saw himself more as a founder and probably has led others to feel that he had a special role among the founders.

Fisher's interview indicates another 'founder' who was more important as a source of meaning in rituals: David Frangquist. According to Fisher, Frangquist "essentially took what had been a protest against religion requirement and an occasional exercise in pantheistic speculation and turned it into, if not a religion, something like a religion." Moreover, Frangquist was the first leader of the group for whom the Druids "served a [spiritual] need." We know that Frangquist's search for material was apparently more extensive than Fisher's. While it would be difficult to say how much he added it is possible to mention a few notable contributions. Frangquist published the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*. While at least some of the material was the writings of other druids, the more serious material in the books of *Customs and Meditations* is certainly Frangquist's. He is also responsible for the collection of the *Green Book of Meditations*, which was intended to be a guide to later Arch Druids. While Fisher can be seen as creating the Druids, Frangquist created a groundwork for its continuation and is probably most responsible that it is still around. Frangquist has also continued to be a leader in the Druids. When

the Carleton Grove faltered in the 1980's Frangquist came to stir up interest. Of course, all of this is not to say that Frangquist is the founder of Druidism instead of Fisher. Fisher indicates that Frangquist "refounded" the Reformed Druids; that is to say that while Fisher along with Nelson and Cherniack started the Druids and gave it much of its outward form, Frangquist was the prime mover in imbuing the movement with meaning. Both individuals were important in the creation of what Druidism is, but in different ways.

It is also claimed that, having started something that blossomed into something he hadn't expected, Fisher "washed his hands" of Reformed Druidism. What is true is that, after a point, Fisher stopped providing the guidance that he initially offered and has stopped initiating contact with Druids; the latest letter from Fisher to a Druid in the International Druid Archives has been dated to 13 April 1970. In his interview Fisher says that he has replied to letters sent to him more recently, though none of the replies have made their way to the Archives. However, his letters have stopped being instructions and aid for a wide audience of Druids



Fisher has expressed concern for the Druids; he particularly expressed worry about people who approach the Druids as something that it is not. Perhaps, he has even wished from time to time that he never started the Druids so that people could not be hurt by it. But having such concerns does not mean that he feels that, on the whole, the Druids are not worthwhile. Indeed, at the end of the interview he wished that the Druids would continue to be around as an aid to those for whom it was suitable.

But if Fisher has not washed his hands of Druidism, why do many people believe he did? Before answering that I will examine why Fisher's early guidance and more active role have faded. This is given a fairly clear answer in the interview. Fisher admits that "I've not maintained an active tie with Druidism because sometimes the leadership has seemed very strange to me." Though Fisher may have felt responsible to some degree early on as the nature of the Reform has changed his desire to guide those led by a different spirit of the Reform has dissipated.

There are, however, good reasons why Fisher has been seen as a recluse. For my own belief I would point to the research of Scharding who only managed to speak to Fisher after ten years and multiple attempts. A certain feeling came from him to me and, I would think, to others that Fisher didn't want to talk. Admittedly Scharding may have had been helped along in his belief. After telling Robert Larson that he had been unable to contact Fisher during an interview Larson's response is 'that figures,' followed by an explanation of why Larson isn't surprised. That may have been enough to turn a string of unsuccessful attempts to contact Fisher into a belief that Fisher couldn't be contacted.

However, the quotation from Margot Adler is of an earlier date and probably arises from the period when Neopagans began to use the vehicle of Reformed Druidism. Certainly Fisher became much more silent as his creation turned towards this

new religious category and his Christianity may have convinced others that he was more opposed to the new path of Reformed Druidism than he actually was. In specific, I would point to Isaac Bonewits as the origin for the belief, especially since he was the primary source for the Reformed Druid material in *Drawing Down The Moon*. I cannot help but feel that when Bonewits wrote that "many of the older members of the RDNA disapprove of Neopagan Druidism, considering it a dangerous step backwards" he was thinking of David Fisher. Bonewits had a vision of Reformed Druidism not as becoming a neopagan vehicle but as already being one, a point which was denied by many of the founders. While there may be other reasons that Bonewits and others saw Fisher as being repulsed by his creation, Bonewits held this belief and was instrumental in its spread.

I hope that I have been able to convince people of two things. The first is that while Fisher is most famous as the founder of Druidism there were others who might take more credit especially in the creation of the meaning and continuation of Druidism. Secondly, that Fisher has not repented of his creation. He still takes an interest in the Druids even if he doesn't actively seek them out. His actions and inactions in the past may have led to other views, but those may now be cleared away. I, at least, have come to a new respect for Fisher and for the importance of other founders as well as for who Fisher is today. I would like to end with a few quotes from the interview, which I felt to be interesting.

* (On how the Druids were started) One night Norman Nelson, Howard Cherniack, and myself were having one drink too many and were trying to figure out what we could do to deal with this (religious) requirement.

* (An analogy for Reformed Druidism) Well, I suppose, given people's need for alternative spiritualities, the Druids are like a template on a word processor that can be filled in with a number of contents.

* (On some of the sources of Reformed Druidism) I must admit we were all readers of science fiction or science fantasy

* (On the *Druid Chronicles (Reformed)*) I thought it was pretty fun.



Seasons of Food

Fall Equinox 2004 - Figs
By Oriana Lewallen, Sunset Proto-Grove

As the harvest of fresh figs enter into the farmers market this time of year, they also seem to eek their way into appetizers, salads and dessert menus at a variety of restaurants. These sweet and versatile fruits have perked my interest at this time, the beginning of fall, and so I thought I would learn a bit more about them.

Figs, as it turns out, are one of the oldest foods in recorded history. It is "believed to be indigenous to western Asia, but was distributed by humans throughout the Mediterranean [region.]....

Evidence of fig cultivation has been found in excavations of Neolithic sites as early as 5,000 BC." (Hellenic LLC)

Figs are mentioned in Greek and Roman mythology, as well as the Christian bible. The prophet Mohammed and Homer both made mention of the good attributes of figs and these sweet fruits were said to be the favorite food of Cleopatra. In fact, it is speculated that Cleopatra's last serving of figs hid in their midst the famous asp, which has been blamed as the cause of her death. Figs are also useful as an herbal remedy, "The milky juice of the freshly-broken stalk of a Fig has been found to remove warts on the body." (Grieve) In Roman mythology the creation of figs was attributed to the god Bacchus, and images of Bacchus were shown with a garland of fig leaves about his head.

It is unclear whether figs were first introduced to the Celts during the original Celtic tribal migration into Europe and Mediterranean or whether the Romans brought figs to the Celts. It has been noted that, "By the end of the Roman Empire, fifth century, fig culture was well distributed. It stretched from Africa, Portugal, France, [the] Channel Islands, and the southern part of England." (FAB) Due to climate, it is unlikely that figs were cultivated widely in England until later, as the trees cannot adjust to cold weather climates. It is very likely however, that dried figs were brought to the Celts regularly along the established trade routes. These days, "in Scotland and many parts of England a south wall is indispensable for their successful cultivation out of doors." (Grieve)

There are literally hundreds of varieties of figs, and the Calimyrna fig; grown in California's San Joaquin Valley requires "a most unusual type of pollination in order to have the fruit mature." (Valley Fig Growers) A tiny wasp called the Blastophaga enters the inverted blossom and pollinates the female flowers. The tiny wasp then exits the fig to pollinate others

Some interesting fig facts as prepared by the California Fig Board (website):

* Although considered a fruit, the fig is actually a flower that is inverted into itself. The seeds are drupes, or the real fruit. Figs are the only fruit to fully ripen and semi-dry on the tree.

* For many years the fig has been used as a coffee substitute. The fruit contains a proteolytic enzyme that is considered an aid to digestion and is used by the pharmaceutical industry.

* And, because of its high alkalinity it has been mentioned as being beneficial to persons wishing to quit smoking.

* Figs contain a natural humectant; a chemical that will extend freshness and moistness in baked products.

* California produced over 30 million pounds of dried figs in 1997. All dried figs harvested in the United States are grown in California's Central Valley.



Recipe for Figs

Dessert: Baked Figs with Honey

Serves 4

Ripe yet Firm Figs

4T Wild Honey

1T Olive Oil

Vanilla Ice Cream (optional)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Snip of points of figs, and brush with olive oil. Arrange figs in small baking pan. (To avoid sticking you can either place each fig on its own individual fig leaf to bake, or simply grease the pan.) Immediately lower oven temperature to 400 degrees. Bake until they puff up, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool. After cooling split each fig in half lengthwise, and drizzle with 1 T of honey. For an added treat top off with a small scoop of vanilla or French vanilla ice cream and/or chopped walnuts. Serve immediately.

**End note: Another way I have had baked figs prepared recently as a salad and appetizer is to quarter them, without piercing the bottom, put a generous amount of gorgonzola cheese in the center, and wrap them in a very thin slice (or two) of prosciutto. (Enough to hold them together) the baking process appeared to be much the same as what I have presented above, maybe a minute or two longer. However, this is rich... so be sure to have a good glass of vino on hand. Enjoy!

Works cited:

Hellenic Communications Service, LLC;

<http://www.helleniccomserve.com/figs.html>

California Fig Board; <http://www.californiafigs.com>

California Fresh Fig Growers Association;

<http://www.calfreshfigs.com/history.html>

History of the Celts:

<http://www.du.nw.schule.de/stgym/Irland/Celts/Timetable.htm>

Fig Advisory Board; <http://www.meccagold.com/history.htm>

Botanical.com; A Modern Herbal- Fig; Grieve;

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/f/figcom12.html>

Valley Fig Growers; <http://www.valleyfig.com/index.htm>

Dessert; Baked Figs with Honey- Figs Recipe created by Oriana after consulting a meal at Don Giovanni's, Napa, CA and a book on Italian cooking, "Food & Wine's Quick Italian cooking from scratch"... this recipe is conglomeration and variance from the two sources with the addition of vanilla ice cream being all



About Nwyfre

By: Rhiannon Hawk, Nemeton Aweyddion

Editor's note: in the Lughnasadh 2004 issue of A Druid Missal-Any Sister Rhiannon wrote an article, Geasa: The Ethics in the Teaching Way of Nwyfre and A Clear Path to Rid Unhealthy Energetic Debris. We have had many inquiries asking what Nwyfre is. Sister Rhiannon explains:

The name Nwyfre could be translated as the spark that ignites the inner flame to burst forth from the Nemeton, to open the center world (Earth) to become a scepter of light that brings all the Triads together in the Here and Now. Nwyfre is not comparable to Dalon Ap Landu, which seems to me to be more comparable to what we would call Cariad Wen or the Nine Fold One. Nwyfre opens the Nemeton so the Nine Fold One can be present fully in the Nemeton.

Spell of the Day: Ethics and Issues

By El Byrd

I cringed inwardly when I see "spell for the day." Why? Because there seems to be too much spell work emphasis and no building of framework for spellwork. I think that the framework is sadly missing in today's majick practice.

My great-gram was a witch. When she worked with one of the kids, she was very emphatic that spells were a last resort. Use only in emergency, Use only when all avenues are exhausted but never, NEVER use as a first attempt to solve a problem.

She taught this way so that we would look for both mundane solutions and majickal ones. And sadly, I don't see that kind of emphasis today. There seems to be too much emphasis on casting spells and doing majick, with little emphasis on mundane solutions.

Now as I move through majick circles, I see a lot of cringing when I mention ethics in majick. I have wondered about it many a time and I have come to the conclusion that many majick users today want to take the easy way out of a problem. In taking the easy way, they have no reason to work a problem from a mundane stance. But as many more practiced majick users know, the easy way can turn into the hardest way of all and have the highest cost in the long term.

When I see a spell, I wonder first and foremost if I will ever really use that spell. My thinking being that if I need a spell, I can make a spell. Second, I wonder if it is better to use the spell written by someone with a particular event or person is the best way for me to go, I am not trying to affect the other person or event but MY person or event.

I won't argue that spells are cool and neat but I will argue if they are making life better or worse when used with little regard for mundane solutions. I would urge any and all who would want to use majick to first look for a mundane solution.

Devise a framework of when you will or will not use majick. This framework is called ethics. Ethics don't just apply to work or school but to all things in life and they are not connected to religion. I would hope that all majick users would have a personal ethic system but I know this is not always done.

Ethics in majick is no more than a series of if-then questions or statements. If this mundane way doesn't work to protect my car, then I will ward my vehicle. If talking to a person about my issues with them does not work, then I will talk to someone to help me talk to them. If that does not work, then I will write them a letter explaining my issues. And last if those did not work, then I might cast a spell to bring understanding to them of my issues.

So I encourage everyone to build that framework and use those spells like and expensive spice, sparingly.

Blessings,

El

News



Libertarian Activist Gary Copeland

Passes Away

It is with sadness that I announce the passing of druid and long-time Libertarian Activist Gary Copeland. He passed away on Monday, August 2, 2004. He is survived by his wife Kelley O'Neill, and three children, Lake, Willow and Ciera.

Gary had been active in the Libertarian Party for over 20 years. He was an outspoken Druid, in fact, he was the first Druid to run for State Office. He has been a candidate for Governor of California, Orange County Supervisor, and other offices. He had been active with voter outreach and with NORML. Anyone who knew Gary knows that he was a generous, spiritual, enthusiastic activist.



U.K. Prosecutors Drop Case Against Druid

August 3, 2004 PORTSMOUTH, England --Prosecutors dropped charges Tuesday against a man who explained that he carried a sword into a shop because he is a druid.

At a brief appearance in court last month, Merlin Michael Williams, 26, said previous cases heard by the court had allowed druids the right to carry ceremonial swords, which are used to cast spells and create circles of safety.

Williams, of Westbourne, southern England, was arrested July 9 after carrying his weapon while shopping at a store in Portsmouth. The sword was confiscated as evidence. The Crown Prosecution Service said the matter had been considered and "it was deemed not to be in the public interest to continue with the

case." Williams, who wore his green and blue druid's robes at last month's court appearance, said his sword, which he calls Taliesin, had been returned. "I am just happy to have got my sword back so I can continue with my duties as sword-bearer," he said. "I can understand how the misunderstanding happened with the police but it was all a bit heavy-handed and they should have listened to my explanation." Williams is a member of Insular Order of the Druids, which was founded in 1993 at Stonehenge and is one of at least eight self-styled druid groups in Britain.

C. The New York Times 2004

Events



Witness the Autumnal Equinox

AT THE UMASS SUNWHEEL
SUNRISE 6:45 a.m. & SUNSET 6:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY
SEPT. 22 & 23, 2004

You are invited to witness the passing of the seasons by joining Dr. Judith Young of the U.Mass. Dept. of Astronomy to watch the Sun rise and set over the tall standing stones in the U.Mass. Sunwheel for the upcoming Autumnal Equinox. Visitors for the sunrise viewing should arrive at 6:45 a.m., and visitors for the sunset viewing should arrive at 6:00 p.m. The sunrise and sunset events will be held on both Wednesday and Thursday September 22 and 23, 2004.

For those interested in learning about the sky, there will be a presentation that will include the cause of the seasons, the Sun's path in the sky, the phases of the Moon, and the story of building the Sunwheel. Bring your questions, your curiosity, and DRESS WARMLY; a \$3 donation is requested to help cover the cost of future stonework at the site. Sunwheel T-shirts & sweatshirts will also be available for purchase.

The exact instant of equinox is 12:30 p.m. EDT on Wednesday Sept. 22. On the equinox, any observer located on the Earth's equator will see the Sun pass directly overhead at local noon and that person will cast no shadow at noon. For all observers on Earth (excluding the N and S poles), the Sun on the equinox is up for 12 hours and down for 12 hours, illuminating all latitudes! (At the N and S poles, the Sun encircles the horizon for 24 hours, either very slowly rising or very slowly setting for

the entire day). From the Sunwheel here in Amherst, the equinox Sun will be seen to rise and set through East and West stone portals.

The U.Mass. Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Road. It can be easily reached from the center of Amherst, following Amity St. to the west. The Sunwheel is on the right hand side of the road about 1/4 mile after crossing University Drive. ALL VISITORS SHOULD WEAR WARM CLOTHING, SUITABLE FOR STANDING STILL ON WET OR SOGGY GROUND. In the event of rain, the events will be cancelled, and visitors are encouraged to visit the Sunwheel on their own.

For more information on the U.Mass. Sunwheel, see <http://www.umass.edu/sunwheel>



The Magical Isles with Mara Freeman

December 4, 2004

An exhilarating tour of the ancient sites of the British Isles and Ireland! Explore standing stones, stone circles, henges, hill-forts, burial mounds and many hidden wonders of the Celtic lands that are still, despite extensive archeological research, places of enduring mystery. As we take a journey through slide images around Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, we will visit haunted caves, hills of vision, islands of pilgrimage and the holy shrines of Celtic saints. You will learn the ancient spiritual, symbolic and mythological importance of each place in the landscape why springs and wells are places of healing; holy hills the centers of geo-mythic energies; and bottomless lakes the abode of legendary beasts. Along the way, you will learn about curious folk customs and rituals, including the lore of faeries, witches and ghosts, and hear many fascinating myths and legends, including Arthurian tales, and legends of dragons, giants, and the Sleepers within the Earth.

10AM-5PM, \$117, through UCSC Extension, 1101 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA. <http://www.ucsc-extension.edu>, Use code EDP 042W26 to enroll. Call University of Santa Cruz Extension, (831) 427-6600 to register.

For more information, please see Mara's website - The Chalice Center for the Celtic Spirit <http://www.celticspirit.org>



New Celtic Music CD!

Greetings-

Irony and Omen Sade (AD of Carleton 1996-99) have just released their first recording, a CD of Celtic harp and flute music titled Rising Sea.

If you would like a copy or more information about Rising Sea please email or write. They are \$14 each, which includes shipping and handling. Questions should come to irony@starmind.org. Orders may be sent to:

Irony Sade
Living Pan Productions
3830 State St. Road
Skaneateles, NY 13152

Thank you all for your support and interest in our music!

Regards,

Irony.
Hemlock Splinters Grove

Calendar

Fall Equinox will occur on Wednesday, September 22, 2004 at 8:30 a.m., Pacific Daylight Time.

A Druid Missal-Any is published eight times a year. Post mail subscriptions are \$8.00 and email subscriptions are free. Or write an article or send us a cartoon and receive a year's post mail subscription free. Write to:

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